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# LADY URSULA'S LOVERS

By Edgar Fawcett

IT was the first Sunday in June, and the church parade in the Park glowed with fair faces. Amid that portion of the crowd which had already wound its way past the laborious ugliness of the Achilles statue and was now leisurely strolling northward, a lady, who walked between two gentlemen, created much passing remark.

Perhaps each of the gentlemen received also a good share of comment; for one was Mr. Pemberton Dalgrish, a prominent statesman, who had served as a cabinet minister during the last term of the Government now out of power, and the other was Lord Melville Barclay, second son of the Marquis of Billowbourne, richer, through inheritance, it was said, than even his brother, the heir, besides being a member of Parliament and one whose recent speeches in the House of Commons had seemed to prophesy brilliant political attainment.

The lady, exquisitely gowned, though with a peculiar consorting of richness and simplicity, bowed right and left to various friends as she moved onward between her two companions. But when she had reached a certain bench and had heard some one softly call her name, she paused, with an air of decision.

"Dear Aunt Anne," she said, "are you sure that this is altogether prudent?"

The other gave a light, musical laugh. She was large, stout, blonde, with a delicious complexion that had survived her sixty years. Lines of age and suffering were visible below her eyes, but the eyes themselves held

blue sparkles of vitality between their golden lashes. As Anne Arbuthnot, she had once had scores of suitors, and still, as the widowed Mrs. Aylesbury, her influence and prestige were very great in the higher English world.

Beside her sat the dull and plain old Duchess of Down, disagreeable to almost everybody, but somehow the devoted admirer of Mrs. Aylesbury.

"It is always prudent, Ursula," Mrs. Aylesbury said, addressing her niece with the winsomeness of manner that had charmed thousands, "for a poor old rheumatic cripple like myself to try the medicine of sunshine. Besides, I'm well furred, as you see, and somewhere, in this happy multitude, lurks my grim but faithful Dobbs."

"But we don't see any Dobbs," Lord Melville said, with his odd, sober sort of buoyancy, pretending to make rapid survey of the open-air assemblage. "What would you do if she betrayed you?"

"What would you do to-morrow if Big Ben should collapse while you were making one of your most glorious Westminster speeches? No; don't try to shake my faith in Dobbs. There isn't a soldier in the Park who would not fly from her matronly frown."

"Militarism is the fashion nowadays," said Pemberton Dalgrish. He spoke in the stolid monotone that almost invariably clad his phrases. He had a clean-shorn face, which at times looked as if it were cut from some stone of a grayish white, so severe was the accentuation of nose, lips, brow, and so marked its pallor. He stood over six feet, a towering figure, big-boned,

loose-jointed, awkward, and yet somehow most keenly expressing the modern London Englishman of highest caste.

"Dobbs is above fashion," protested Mrs. Aylesbury; "'she holds no form of creed, but contemplates them all.'"

"Nice talk," said Lord Melville, "for a Sunday-morning church parade!"

"You drive me to it," cried Mrs. Aylesbury, "by daring to cast an aspersion on my Dobbs!"

"Then we'll stroll on and wait for you at luncheon, Aunt Anne?" said the younger lady, who had been addressed as Ursula.

"Yes, dear; and the duchess is coming too. So nice of her, isn't it?"

"Very," smiled Mrs. Aylesbury's niece, who did not think the duchess could be nice under any conceivable circumstances; she endured her grace without visible boredom, only because of the real fondness felt and shown by that great lady for her cherished aunt.

"Lady Ursula," called out the duchess, in her grim, crackling way, "please have dry toast for me, will you not? I never touch bread in any other form."

"I remember," was the genial response.

And then Lady Ursula, when she had nodded across her shoulder and moved away with her two companions still on either side, said, amusedly:

"It is so droll! The duchess always demands her dry toast whenever she lunches or dines with us. But she never dreams of eating it. She devours pastry, salads—all kinds of unwholesome things—but the dry toast remains untouched."

"Perhaps she presents it as a peace-offering to the god or goddess of Dyspepsia," said Lord Melville.

"Is there any doubt about the sex of Dyspepsia?" asked Lady Ursula. She spoke laughingly, but turned at the same moment to Dalgrish, perhaps fearing one of his long silences.

"They say it inflicts torments," returned Dalgrish, "and yet is apt to spring from trifling sources. Why not make it a feminine deity?"

"Are women the only triflers in the world?" she asked, as if his bitterness hurt.

"No; but they are quite the most agreeable."

"How can a torment be pleasant?"

"How can a pleasure be tormenting?" he shot back, swiftly.

"You mean——?"

"That I am never happy save when I am near you, and I am always unhappy when not alone with you."

Their voices had been very low, and yet she turned, half-startled, toward Lord Melville.

But he had not heard. He was watching a peculiarly obese wood-pigeon, settled on the bough of a sapling elm.

"Look!" he exclaimed; "for all the world it's just like the Duchess of Down, after banqueting with your aunt—corpulent, comfortable, sleepy, with every evidence of having gone in for juicy meats, rich salads, and everything that means the opposite of dry toast."

"Leave the poor wood-pigeon in peace," chided Lady Ursula. "If birds carry tales, why may they not feel the magnetism of slanders?"

"Oho!" laughed Lord Melville; "is her grace so darkly down in your bad books?"

"Not at all. I shall order her dry toast of the butler, with an alacrity born of affection, the instant I am at home."

"Affection!" repeated Lord Melville. "Come, now; you don't really love the 'dismal duchess.'"

"She's very fond of Aunt Anne. I like her for that. I like her for liking my best friend on earth."

Here Dalgrish spoke. "You say that as if you had an enemy on earth."

"I have," she answered.

"Who's your enemy?" asked Dalgrish.



"Who?" echoed Lord Melville. "We both thirst for his blood; don't we, Dalgrish?"

"You can't kill Fate," said Lady Ursula, softly.

Across her beautiful, graceful head the eyes of her two lovers met. They both understood.

## II

"Is she not lovely?" Mrs. Aylesbury was saying to the "dismal duchess," as her niece receded, escorted by the two men who, as all London knew, were struggling for her hand.

A gruff little mutter gave reply. But it was not dissent. With all her rank and wealth, Grace Harley, the daughter of a duke and now the widow of one, had lived a life that had hardened her. One daughter had brought disgrace upon her, another had died in girlhood with frightful suddenness, and her only son had been drowned. Some spirits are etherealized by calamity; hers was coarsened. "I still have my appetite left," she would say; "a five-shilling peach, when particularly high-flavored, interests me; my three little Poms amuse me at times; I like a French novel, when it is thoroughly awful and yet written with amazing cleverness. There isn't a man living whom I can endure; all the nice ones are dead and buried; and there's just one woman on earth who doesn't bore me—Anne Aylesbury. The silver's got into her hair, but it hasn't left her laugh, and she diffuses the same fascination to-day that I used to bask in when she was eighteen."

It was seldom that her grace condescended to discuss the looks, good or bad, of any fellow-creature. But she chose, just now, to exploit one of her blunt, curt criticisms.

"Ursula's hair is superb. I hate reddish hair except when it has those shiny streaks, and hers crinkles a little, besides. Her face reminds one of Romney's women—the tapering

chin and those big, gold-black eyes; but Ursula's entirely a more perfect piece of natural contrivance. She's a little too thin for my taste—*elle manque d'ampleur*. But, then, flesh is out of fashion now. Do you remember your Tennyson? Somewhere he says of a girl that she was 'lightly, musically made.' That describes Ursula; she's 'musically made.'"

Mrs. Aylesbury bowed slow yet hearty acquiescence. "But I wish her life, poor dear, had been thus far less touched by discords. Think of it, Grace; she is not yet five-and-twenty, yet what trouble she has been through!"

The duchess only laughed. "Bah, Anne! Been through, indeed! What have *we* been through, pray? At seven-and-thirty you lost your husband, one of the most brilliant statesmen in Europe. And both your children—sweet girls!—died just as they were budding into womanhood! And what have I been through, Anne? Ah, you know, you know! Look at our dukedom, that poor Bertie left! Where is it now? Disgraced by that reprobate who is worn out with his vices at forty! Ursula, forsooth! Why, her bed's been one of roses, thus far. Born an earl's daughter, with five thousand a year, she married that Australian millionaire. Did she love him? Um—probably not."

"I suppose she thought she loved him when they married," said Mrs. Aylesbury, who never minded the duchess's brusque ways, always sure of the love and fidelity that lay beyond them. "Jasper Garth had good manners, a certain definite polish. He settled that large sum on her. You know what girls are—all London was running after him. Nobody here had found out anything wrong in his family; they were simply obscure Australians, I believe, living somewhere on the outskirts of Melbourne, before Jasper began to make his first grand *coup* in the gold districts. I once fancied that he disliked to speak at all concerning his people, and suspected

there might have been some shady traffic connected with them. But one day Ursula herself explained it all. His parents were ordinary and plain *bourgeois*, who had given him an education—he wasn't in the least illiterate, you'll recall—and then had peaceably perished on their farm. He was an only child; there was no one to fight for his money after—he—went."

Mrs. Aylesbury lingered palpably over the last three words. The duchess at once caught her up.

"I see; you reflect Ursula's absurd doubt."

"Do I?" Mrs. Aylesbury half sighed. "Well, I live with her, you know. One can't do that, I suppose, and not feel the contagion."

"Truly," grumbled the duchess, "it's gruesome to think how some people delight in borrowing trouble! Here's Ursula, one of the richest young widows in England, who allows herself to become the prey of hobgoblin fancies."

"She doesn't think them hobgoblin," said Mrs. Aylesbury, with an unwonted faintness of tone.

"Oh," snapped the duchess, "then you're under her spell? Shake it off, Anne; it's ridiculous. Didn't the courts give her all his money? Good heavens! if there had been a doubt of death would our English jurisprudence not have refused her the benefit of it?"

Mrs. Aylesbury caught her friend's hand. "Grace, you can't scold a sentiment into extinction. I was tempted to try that, once, but I failed. And now——"

"Now you sympathize with her!"

"I pity her."

"You ought not to. She didn't care for him when he sailed back again to Australia. She was tired of him, repelled by him. He wasn't of her *monde*, and the fact came out to her in burning tints. You needn't attempt to deny this, Anne. I know I'm hated by many persons because I rigidly adhere to what they call my patrician creeds. Ursula and her husband were oil and water. Nothing

could have been more natural. She woke to a sense of it. Fate, for once, was kind. He went back to his own country on a visit of financial necessity. The stanch vessel that bore him collided in a fog with some other craft. There was a ghastly accident—only one boatful of women and children, with a single sailor, to tell how complete had been the *Carpentaria's* wreck! The ship that almost split her in two was never heard from. That she was so injured herself as to sink soon after the blow she had inflicted, thousands, hundreds of thousands, feel confident at the present hour. The whole matter is now as clear as day. The times of *Robinson Crusoe* are ancient history, Anne. Marine trade has killed marine romance. Ursula's present attitude is thoroughly idiotic. There's a remote possibility that her husband is now on some isle of Oceanica, building nocturnal bonfires there. But, then, there is just the same remote possibility that every house over yonder in Park Lane, from the Marble Arch to Hamilton Place, may suddenly and simultaneously collapse in ruins. The truth is, Anne, your beloved Ursula needs a course of waters. Why not get her to Carlsbad by the end of July? You really should. I'll give you a note to my Carlsbad doctor. If he takes her in hand, I don't doubt she'll come back with all her nightmare delusions ended on the subject of Mr. Enoch Robinson Jasper Arden Crusoe Garth!"

Mrs. Aylesbury was covertly biting her lips as the duchess paused. "No, Grace," she protested, "you're quite on the wrong path; Ursula's ailment isn't physical. And I don't think, dear, that you have put the case just—accurately. In the first place, Ursula held that long interview with the sailor, Reuben Creech."

"Oh, I'd forgotten that—one of the survivors."

"He told her that, in the awful panic which followed the manning of the boats, he had distinctly seen her husband, whom he chanced to know by sight, Jasper having previously been

pointed out to him as the great Australian millionaire. Already the deck of the *Carpentaria* was being swept by the heavy seas. Jasper's tall figure stood forth in the boldest relief. He was trying to comfort a little, terrified throng. He cried out to them: 'I feel in my soul that I shall be saved!' as if to rally their drooping courage. Then Reuben Creech, whom the captain had himself pushed into the boat with the wailing women and children, saw no more of the poor *Carpentaria*, for a huge wave shouldered him off from her and the fog folded its gray curtains around him and his pitiful charge. Poor Reuben! No wonder his hair was white as snow, though he had hardly passed thirty. The other sailor, who was to help him in the boat, was not there, you know, when looked for. While obeying, like Reuben, the captain's order, he had fallen into the sea. Think of fifty hours passed in that hollowing and heightening ocean! You may remember that when they got out into sunshine and were, almost miraculously, picked up by a sailing vessel, two of the women were mad and one had died, with her baby at her breast. Reuben's whole recital had a fearful effect on Ursula. His description of her husband, standing so courageously among those terrorized fellow-voyagers, pierced her soul. She had always known him to be good and brave, and now it filled her with a sort of guilty consternation to recall that she had never loved him. They had had a kind of quarrel—their first real one—just before he sailed. Jasper's temper, sometimes hot with others, had always been the essence of evenness with Ursula. Beyond all question, she was the love of his life; in spirit he was always at her feet. I won't say that Ursula found herself loving him after she had lost him——"

"But, my dear Anne," petulantly broke in the duchess, "that's just what you *are* saying!"

"No, I'm not," persisted Mrs. Aylesbury. "What I do say is that Ursula envelops his memory with a delicate and sweet idealism. She is always

haunted by the feeling that he possessed traits and qualities which she foolishly, wantonly neglected. Now, add to this mental state the incessant reëchoing in her ears of those words which the sailor heard her husband speak, in that lurid hour, on the deck of that shattered and sinking ship. Not long ago she told me, very calmly—for she is nearly always quite calm—that the sentence spoken by Reuben Creech, just as he delivered it to her, will keep ringing in her brain for a whole day, from the end of sleep to the beginning of sleep, without the slightest cessation—"I feel in my soul that I shall be saved!" I don't think Carlsbad, or any *bad*, could silence that voice, unless it were some magic *fontaine de jouvence*. There's not a hint of pose, remember, about Ursula. Perhaps I shouldn't mention, even to you, these mysterious little details."

"Mysterious, Anne! I should say so! Come, now; *soyons exactes*. Does Ursula positively think that her husband may turn up at some future time? Does she, or does she not?"

Mrs. Aylesbury mused. At length: "She keeps hearing that voice."

"Anne!" cried the duchess, "you're insupportable!"

"You mean that Ursula is!"

"Pshaw! You humor the girl in this nonsense—it's self-evident."

"I feel sorry for her in more ways than this."

"What other ways, if you please?"

"Grace, I meant to inform you; but, really, you are so particularly snappish this morning!"

"If I'm specially snappish, it's perhaps because I'm getting hungry. You told me you were going to have *sole au vin blanc*, and your *chef* does it miles beyond mine."

Mrs. Aylesbury made a movement as if to rise. But her companion at once laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"No, no, Anne; not yet. You must tell me about those other reasons for thinking Ursula's fate a sad one."

## III

"My dear Ursula is breathing just now," Mrs. Aylesbury continued, "what I can best describe as an electric atmosphere. Two men, each of whom, after his fashion, is amongst the cleverest in England, have laid steady siege to her heart. With that same heart I believe she likes Lord Melville Barclay the better of the two. He is handsomer, more vivacious, more sparkling, more human. But Pemberton Dalgrish must by no means be counted out. Each wages war effectually, but Dalgrish employs, perhaps, the more skilful tactics. His fascination is almost purely intellectual, and yet the force of this passion so abounds with intensity that now and then Melville strikes me as hardly his match. The entire situation is a novel one."

"Novel?" sniffed the duchess. "Why, good heavens, Anne, are you getting a taste for hyperbole, with your increasing years? What can be more ordinary than the devotions received by a rich and well-born young widow from two rather exceptional men?"

"No, no," declared Mrs. Aylesbury; "you are quite wrong in all this; you take the conventional view, and it is not an affair which the conventional view fits, because each man is keenly aware that Ursula dreads to marry again; because each man is bent upon trying to dissipate in her mind the curious, adhesive loyalty to an idea. Each knows that she will never marry until that idea has become null—until she bids it a voluntary farewell, and ceases forever to harbor what they both rate as the most idle of superstitions. Meanwhile, she does not dismiss them as her suitors, and, too, all the vividness, the captivation, the interest, the excitement of daily contact with both potent personalities exerts upon her its continual strain. This is why I have said that the atmosphere she breathes is electric. Now, come home with me to luncheon, and see for yourself—or, perhaps, you will see nothing."

Here Mrs. Aylesbury rose, with much difficulty. The vigilant Dobbs at once appeared from nowhere, and with like alacrity the duchess's footman, wearing her well-known livery of olive-green and yellow mountings, glided from discreet ambush.

The luncheon, with its perfection of fruits, viands and rare wines, was served almost immediately on the arrival of the two ladies. There would have been pathos in Mrs. Aylesbury's abstemiousness, while she partook only of one or two plain dishes cooked for herself alone, and yet sat surrounded by healthy appetites and fearless digestions, if her smiling lips and genial manners had not now, as always, made her the most winsome of invalids.

The talk was lively and careless. "Will you go to St. Moritz with your aunt in July, Ursula?" asked the duchess, when the edge of her hunger had been sufficiently blunted to permit of her speaking at all.

"As if I wouldn't go to one of the Poles with her, duchess!" replied Ursula, with a fond glance at Mrs. Aylesbury; "provided her tastes lay in that direction."

"But you might argue," said Lord Melville, "as to which of the Poles it ought to be."

"I shouldn't think it *ought* to be either," said Ursula, with a certain hard demureness, looking down at her plate; "that is, not for a person troubled with rheumatism."

"The South Pole sounds more Summery," threw off Dalgrish, his grave voice making the flippancy rather droll. Then he added: "But I quite agree with Melville—you'd have your views."

"I won't hear Ursula called a woman with views," rebuked Mrs. Aylesbury.

"All Englishmen are beginning to have them, I'm afraid," snarled the duchess. "It's the result of that awful American invasion."

"Don't hate the Americans, please, duchess," pleaded Lord Melville. "Their delightful daughters are the last hope of our bankrupt aristocracy."



"Does that mean," frowned her grace, "that you've an eye on some Oregonian heiress, pretty as a peacock, and with just as ugly a voice?"

"I'll think it over after you've quite ruined me at bridge," was the meek answer.

"Impudent boy! I've never played with you but three times."

"Make it four, duchess. I'm sure you will, if you only recall my leaving Lady Bedevere's house at two, the other morning, minus ninety-seven pounds."

"Bless me!" said the duchess, popping on her glasses, without which she liked to make folk believe she could see no further than the food she put on her plate, "I thought it was Mr. Dalgrish."

"Do we look alike?" asked the latter, sedately.

"I've heard that you sometimes feel alike," said the duchess, in her throat, pointedly.

The two men looked at each other. Not a muscle of Dalgrish's face moved, for a moment. Lord Melville, on the other hand, gave a light laugh. Then their two pairs of eyes sought Lady Ursula.

"They quarreled again last week in the House of Commons, I'm told," Lady Ursula said.

"It must have been ever so dramatic," said Mrs. Aylesbury. "Yet, an hour or so later, these two implacable foes were peacefully dining together on the terrace. Somebody passed them and listened to their conversation. It was about the Gold Cup Day at Ascot and their mutual surprise at Bellerophon's victory."

Perhaps Mrs. Aylesbury exaggerated a little, or had heard certain romanticized reports. Nevertheless, Lord Melville and Pemberton Dalgrish would now and then dine together, and sometimes visit each other's chambers, which were not far apart, in the St. James's region.

One such visit happened a few days after the luncheon in Upper Grosvenor street. The rooms, this time, were Dalgrish's, charmingly fur-

nished, one giving into the other, through heavy purple tapestries. The first room was wainscoted on three sides with low book-cases. Except for the ceiling, a vague mauve, every tint in it was purple.

As the two men entered this first room a little after midnight, a glimpse of the adjacent apartment was also moderately clear. Between the half-drawn purple tapestries you saw Dalgrish's immense desk, littered with innumerable papers. Lord Melville knew that the walls were gray and covered with many choice and beautiful prints. But he also knew that the rest of the room had not a note of elegance or distinction. It represented one-half of its owner, just as this empurpled coign of taste, simplicity and superfine beauty represented the other half.

He appropriated an arm-chair that seemed to be awaiting him, beside an ebony table on which were a siphon, a decanter, some glasses and an open box of cigarettes. Into a second arm-chair Dalgrish presently sank. They both lighted cigarettes and smoked in silence. Also in silence, Lord Melville made himself something "fizzy" to drink. Again, and still in silence, Dalgrish imitated his guest.

The relations between these men were certainly remarkable. That evening Lord Melville had spoken in the House of Commons witheringly against tenets which he knew that his friend cherished. He had made no personal reference to Dalgrish, nor had Dalgrish, in his reply, gone beyond generalities of rebuttal and defiance. Both had the ear of the House, and their gifts of debate were equally admired there. Lord Melville was the richer man; but in birth, and the prestige which England accords to it, they ran an even race. Each was accredited strictly honorable. Party prejudice, on this point, conceded all its arrows to be blunted. Some observers liked to declare, however, that their intimacy was founded on a hypocritical basis. This, however, did not necessarily con-

cern their integrity. All was fair in love and war, granted their most ironical critics. They were both trying to marry one of the most alluring women in the land, and if they chose to watch each other like panthers preparing to swoop on the same object of prey, that was quite a matter of tact pitted against tact, and skill against skill.

The simile of the two panthers cannot be called inept. The pair knew the same people, lived very much the same lives. In almost any other country than England, they would have been open foes. As it was, there was perfect truth in the statement that they did not hate each other. Lord Melville cordially admired his rival's mental abilities, and almost passionately, though with covert stress, exalted him as a wooer of boundless cunning. Dalgrish, on his own side, thought Lord Melville one of the handsomest men he had ever seen, respected the virility and audacity of his intellect, and regarded the force of his fascination with women as a boon which the gods had made dazzlingly potent.

Each feared, therefore, with an incessant, smoldering affright, the other's success as a suitor. There were two subjects on which they hardly ever touched; one was Lady Ursula herself, and one was politics. All their animosity, all their accusations, recriminations and reprisals, they appeared coolly to leave behind them at St. Stephen's, when Parliamentary moments came to an end. This evening they had met at a great ball in Devonshire House, where all patrician London was prepared to welcome them, and they had left only because of a certain lady's relatively early departure.

Each of these men was eager to banish from the mind of Lady Ursula a certain tormenting phantom of suspicion. Yet all argument, as to the supreme probability that her husband was now dead, had thus far failed with her. Of course, she had duly recognized the weight of testimony. The courts of England, for instance, had concluded to treat the matter of Jasper

Garth's death as a fact incontestably secure. This, in itself, had a world of solid significance. So had the account given by Reuben Creech. Indeed, Lady Ursula would sometimes merely sigh to one or the other of her adorers, and affirm that her posture of indecision was born of imagination, fancy, even morbid nervousness. "Call the prejudice whatever you please," she would add, "it is none the less unconquerable."

Both the lovers secretly admitted a deadlock in their future overtures. And yet for both it was a time of stealthy waiting, of drastic suspense. "Is he keeping faith with me?" Lord Melville would ask himself, in furtive anxiety. "May there not be some plan in his brain, at the present moment, for pushing her into a state of concession and surrender?"

The same question, however differently framed, would be put by Dalgrish to his own thoughts. And so months had gone on. Each mistrusted the other with a kind of veiled savagery, yet neither believed that the other would, or could, have recourse to any actual treachery.

The silence which had now fallen upon them Lord Melville suddenly broke. "I was thinking," he said, "that these two apartments resemble you. Here's your esthetic side—heaven help the word, though, 'soiled, of late years, by all ignoble use!' Yonder"—and he pointed through the aperture in the voluminous curtains—"you are revealed as the worker. You're a hard worker, too; I see that."

The last three words were understood clearly by Dalgrish, and he valued not a little the compliment they conveyed. It was precisely as if his companion had praised his speech of a few hours ago, which had teemed with statistics lucidly presented.

"I don't suppose I work a whit harder than you do, Barclay," he replied.

Lord Melville screened a yawn. "God knows I do my poor best. These infernal London seasons take

it out of one, though. Don't you find it that way?"

"I find that life takes it out of one."

Lord Melville raised his glass. "Not with some men."

"With men like you and me," said Dalgrish.

"You're not—er—sensitive, eh?"

"I've learned how to seem otherwise."

"You've learned very successfully."

Dalgrish laughed, faintly. "Come, now; you don't wear your heart on your sleeve for daws to peck at."

"Bless me," smiled Lord Melville, "I thought I passed for the essence of candor and impetuosity."

"Between what we seem and what we are quite often stretch abysmal deeps." Dalgrish gave this out in lazy monotone. "Am I not right?" he ended, making a big smoke-cloud.

"No doubt." Lord Melville flashed a glance across the table at his host's keen, beardless profile. It had for him, just then, a Dantesque grimness. "But if you say this of men, what shall be said of women?"

"Oh, they're sometimes more than abysmal; they're fathomless."

"Which means—problematic."

"Call it that. One marvels, at times, what it is, after all, that makes them worth solving."

"And how few solutions man ever reaches!"

"You mean," said Lord Melville, briskly, "because they keep guard on themselves with such astuteness?"

"Yes. There's no finding out some things from them, unless they choose to tell you. And then how often do they tell you the truth?"

The eyes of the two speakers here slowly met. It was almost as if Dalgrish had established between their separate selves a sudden magnetic current. Lord Melville had the sensation of clutching some sort of electric knob.

On the chess-board of their apathy, Dalgrish had made an abrupt move. No reference to Lady Ursula had been ventured, and yet the air now tingled with her name.

"To what kind of truth do you allude?" Lord Melville asked. A spell seemed to be enwrapping him; he even tried to struggle against the influence, and failed. Dalgrish's powerful personality was at work upon him—or so he almost luridly fancied.

"The truth," said Dalgrish, "that a man desires when he is in love."

"Ah," breathed his hearer. Then he rapidly swept on: "But so many women don't know their own hearts."

"And so many have no hearts to know!"

"Conceding the wisdom below your cynicism, Dalgrish, may I ask——?"

The other rose. He went to one of the book-cases just opposite his visitor and leaned against it, facing him. On the clean-drawn features gleamed an undue pallor. His bad figure was graceless as usual, but his head, slightly thrown back, held that poise of challenge and defiance which his observer had more than once witnessed under the Gothic groining of the House.

"You may ask me anything you like," he said. "Suppose we have it out with each other, sensibly and definitely, now, even if forever after we hold our peace."

Lord Melville, palpitating with inward emotions, which only the mellow and lambent blue of his eyes disclosed, raised himself bolt upright in his chair, and answered, gravely:

"Very well; let us have it out with each other, as you propose."

#### IV

DALGRISH left the book-case and returned to his seat beside the table.

"We are both in love with the same woman. We are both intensely desirous of marrying her."

Thrilled with amazement, Lord Melville nodded and murmured, "Yes."

"Each of us has paid court for a long time. No distinct result arrives. There is, of course, her reluctance to marry."

"I agree to that."

"But the reluctance is founded on a dream, a bit of feminine nervousness, a flimsy and idle speculation. It is, in short, wholly ridiculous."

"Granted."

"There seems no reason why it should not be dissolved, dissipated completely, by the influx of an honest passion. Ten, twenty men have doubtless craved this result, for she is one of those women who wring male hearts as guiltlessly as she might bruise grass with her footsteps. Such women are rare, and when they dawn upon us they hold among their sisters the same place as roses hold among flowers. We say of this flower or that, 'I like it more,' 'I like it less'; but of the rose we say nothing, and mean everything."

"You paint a portrait in words; you're a verbal Sir Joshua. I can't say more," interrupted Lord Melville.

"I want you to say more, and in quite a different strain, presently," replied Dalgrish. "I hope it will also be in an acquiescent strain."

"Acquiescent? How?"

"In this way, Barclay." With both arms laid along the table-edge, and with eyes burning into his companion's face like two steady-flamed tapers, Dalgrish went on:

"All the others have gone; we alone are left. This sort of triangular thing might continue for an age yet. Suppose I make you an offer to compromise. It sounds odd, doesn't it?"

Lord Melville nodded. He had gained, by this time, as much real self-control as the semblance of it heretofore assumed.

"Very odd, indeed, Dalgrish. What sort of an offer to compromise?"

"Going away."

"Going—away? I don't understand."

"For three months—we two, in each other's company, slipping away, if you please. Parliament, as you know, closes next Wednesday."

"Yes."

"We disappear a day or two afterward. She has no news of us. We bid her good-bye, and sail."

"Sail? Where, pray?"

"For Norway, on Reginald Cleeve's yacht. He told me yesterday it was mine till Autumn. The doctors, you've probably heard, order him to Marienbad. He's horribly used up; all his plans for a great northern cruise have fallen through. Is my proposal too sudden for you to accept it immediately? Would you prefer to think it over—to sleep on it?"

Lord Melville had grown pale. "But its meaning, Dalgrish?"

The other gave a slight shrug. "Oh, its meaning is absence. To *her* this absence may evoke discovery. I'm not too cryptic, I hope."

"You're not cryptic at all," Lord Melville launched forth, full of resolute emphasis. "You're plain as day. The discovery, you think, may prove for her a clear perception as to which of us she really loves——?"

"Yes."

"And when we return, after having looked upon the maelstrom and the midnight sun, and all that—after having refreshed our intelligences, jaded by service to the British Empire—we may make a totally unforeseen discovery. We may find our enchantress engaged to marry Smith, Brown, or Jones!" Lord Melville rose, flinging his cigarette into the half-consumed liquid of his tumbler. "No, thanks, Dalgrish. I don't care for that kind of compromise. With all courtesy, I must refuse to accept it."

The other, for a short time, remained seated. "I felt you'd refuse at first," he said, with eyes on the floor. But, while he was quitting his chair, Lord Melville's voice rang firmly:

"At first! Always, rather! I mean to play a stubborn game, and to play it out in my own way." His genial eyes hardened; a tenseness seemed to touch the rims of his lips. "I think, also, that I may win at the end, provided——"

"Provided?"

With hands thrust into his pockets, Lord Melville veered around on one heel. Then, as he roamed the room, with lowered head: "Oh, I don't wish



to imply for an instant that the game will not be played fairly—fairly on both sides.”

“You may rest sure it will be so played on one side,” declared Dalgrish.

After this, they remained apparent friends, though really on much colder terms than before. Dalgrish never forgave a snub, and he had the most bleeding sense that Lord Melville had dealt him a round one; not because the latter had rebuffed him—he had not expected anything like quick compliance—but because his overtures had received such prompt check. He felt as though his rival had sneered at him for cowardice, instead of greeting respectfully his signs of temporary truce. He was burning indignantly, that night, after Lord Melville departed. But anger soon blent itself with the jealousy that had long lain semi-somnolent in his life. The fire was fed with a new fuel, and increased accordingly.

He had meant strictest justice. Anything, it had come to seem, would be better than this perpetual uncertainty. To-day, for example, Lady Ursula would drive with him in the Park. She would look angelic in some profusely becoming hat or frock. She would beam with benignant—not coquetry, for there was not a shadow of it in her temperament. He would tell her, for the fiftieth time, that she was the one woman on earth to him, and, for the fiftieth time, she would answer his entreaties with certain phrases full of pitying sweetness, that conveyed no tangible response at all. And with Melville Barclay he was confident it would be quite the same. Next day *he* would have *his* golden hour, his fervid questionings, his drear disappointments. And so it would go on and on. What better for all three of them than some sting of change, like this purposed separation? Each was in a rut of usage, habit; each might be wholesomely dislocated. The dual absence might appeal to her like nothing else. And his own and Barclay's ability to bear it might be

tested as proof of what power her innocent sorcery had exerted and could still exert.

But no; Lord Melville had insolently flung aside the proposal, on the very threshold of its presentation. He preferred a continuance of war. But that definition did not cover his negative pose. There was something else. He had implied distrust. Dalgrish, who had never done an underhand thing in his life, now felt himself wondering whether he might not, if temptation rose, break the bonds of his past moral strictness. But, of course, there was no *escalier dérobé* into Lady Ursula's favor. She would go on, hugging her superstition about the possibility of her husband not being dead, and to try to budge it would be like setting one's shoulder against a mountain.

## V

LORD MELVILLE, on his own side, had with irony compared himself to a wary fly, which declines the cobweb hospitalities of a specially guileful spider.

“Not that I think Pemby Dalgrish,” he reflected, “a trickster or dissembler. Far from that! There isn't a political foe in whom I repose more solid faith. But love isn't politics, and there's no man living to whom I'd yield an inch in a fight like ours. It's marvelous that we've hung together amicably so long a time. Perhaps, his whole attempted plan is based on a belief that she cares more for him than me. Well, now and then I think she does; but now and then I think she doesn't. Still, in any case, I keep my own counsel, steer my own boat. Her wild fancy about Jasper Garth is like a veil that maddeningly shrouds her. But if I've no strength, myself, to rend the veil, I'll not trust to another's energies. Wooing is like dying; you've got to do it alone, for the reason that no other process has yet been discovered. If I wish to learn how well or ill my lady bears

my absence on the perilous main," pursued Lord Melville, thinking very much as he was wont sometimes to talk, "I'll not go halves in my seafaring with the man who wishes to marry her quite as much as I do!"

They both had the good taste to keep silent before Lady Ursula. She now saw them oftener than usual, for the season was one of especial gaiety. Whither she went one of them always followed, and oftener the two.

One afternoon Ursula came in from a very fashionable charity bazaar, held on this occasion at the Botanical Gardens. She was dressed entirely in white, frilled and furbelowed with such bounty and symmetry that her slender form, crowned with the ruddy-tinted waves of her lovely hair, seemed like a flower more wondrous than any of those which she was describing as the environment of this Regent's Park festivity.

"I suppose *they* were there," at length hazarded her aunt.

"*They*, Aunt Anne?"

"Don't pretend not to understand, Ursula, dear."

The younger woman broke into a laugh. "As if I could pretend anything with you!"

Mrs. Aylesbury never rebuked or scolded. But now she felt constrained to be very direct.

"Ursula, you must like one of them better—a little better, at least. You can't care for both equally. But you've allowed them to send all other serious suitors away. It is so widely expected of you that you'll soon make a choice! Come, dear, whether you do make a choice or not, tell me which of them you prefer."

"But you mean as my husband, Aunt Anne; and I don't think of either in that way! You know my reasons, surely."

Mrs. Aylesbury repressed a sigh. "Yes; I know your reasons, my child. But, if these did not exist, if you were willing to marry again,

which of these two men would you choose?"

Ursula sat silent, looking down at her hands in their long white gloves, where they rested among the feathery white puffings of her gown.

"Will you not answer, then? Remember, I've never put to you this question so pointedly before."

Ursula's eyes had drooped, but she lifted them now, darkly splendid, with golden stars in their dusk.

"I've thought it all over, very often," she hesitantly began. "There are times when talking to Dalgrish and realizing that he cares for me are sources of great delight. He is not merely clever; he has a rich, profound mind; its workings affect me with a feeling of valued privilege; I seem to have crossed, in his more confidential moments, a kind of guarded threshold, and to see beyond it the workings of some large but exquisite piece of mechanism; the flash and whizz of intricate cogwheels both perplex and please me—and it is all so smooth of motion, so exact, so harmonious—so admirably oiled against minor and petty resistances!"

Mrs. Aylesbury smiled, but at the same instant gave a meaning little nod. "Very pretty as rhetoric, my dear; but we women don't love with our intellects. Now, tell me of Melville Barclay. I see you're coloring. Is that a confession?"

"Melville," murmured her niece, "is a most amiable, companionable man. He's by no means lacking in brains, but he's often more picturesque than thoughtful. He inherited prejudices, bigotries, if you will. So did Pemberton Dalgrish. And yet one has shaken them off, while the other——"

"Good heavens! I didn't ask you, Ursula, for a treatise on his mental capacity! This comes, I suppose, of your going into British politics, with two celebrated young statesmen mad to marry you. I've just found out that you don't love Dalgrish except with your head. Now, frankly, do you love Melville with your heart?"

Lady Ursula rose at this, went up to her aunt and kissed her on each cheek. "Our emotions are curious contrivances. We are told that the heart is muscle. One shouldn't deny anatomical truths; but, for my part, I should rather have suspected it of being wax."

"Wax is impressionable."

"Yes; but malleable, plastic. And then forgetfulness, ennui, can so easily turn its surface into a *tabula rasa*. You spoke of my having colored just now; the flush was only a guilty one."

"Guilty, Ursula! You mean that you're ashamed of not caring more than you do for either man?"

"Precisely that." And Ursula's face, weebegone one minute, was wreathed in smiles the next.

Mrs. Aylesbury gave an admonishing gesture, with pain in her gentle eyes. "But is this fair?" she exclaimed. "Is it not unworthy of you? Ought you not to dismiss them both?"

"Dismiss them? As if I could!"

"You can't, then?"

"They wouldn't go. They would say that they were going, but they would stay on. Oh, I know them!"

"But you've let them clear the field of everybody else!" Mrs. Aylesbury laughed.

"'Everybody else,' as you phrase it, cleared the field of their own accord. These two are a survival——"

"Of the fittest?"

"Or the fondest, whichever you will."

"Oh, Ursula, you're incorrigible! I've an appointment with Heath Hammond to-morrow morning, and I've half a mind to beg his intercession."

"Dear old Heath Hammond!" said Ursula. "We've talked it over several times."

Her aunt gave a dismayed scream. Through her mind floated a vision of one of the staidest and most hard-headed men in England, and one of its most capable lawyers as well, listening to a monologue of Ursula's which must have struck him as the essence of childish frivolity.

He had consented to assume a trus-

teeship of Mrs. Aylesbury's property, and later, after the inheritance of Jasper Garth's riches, he became to Ursula an invaluable counselor. But these two ladies represented a family which his father, the famous Dudley Hammond, had legally served and advised in former years. Heath rarely took new clients; he had more now than most men of his profession could safely have harbored.

No one doubted his great abilities, and yet it was strange how every one, if asked concerning his social equipments, would have pronounced him dull. But it was, nevertheless, an alleged dullness, quite disconnected with unpopularity. The most exclusive London houses were not merely open to him; he was very frequently invited to pass beyond their lintels, to break bread with their occupants.

The Duchess of Down, on a fair part of whose possessions he kept the wariest protective eye, had rather recently said of him, in her staccato manner: "We call Heath Hammond an 'old' fellow; he isn't fifty yet. We call him dull; he's comfortable, soothing, self-effacing, never flirts, has immense powers of sympathetic listening, and in some perfectly unexplainable way makes us all believe that we are clever, when we are at our most stupid ebb. We call him one of the ugliest men in London, but, when we attempt to analyze his features, we find each of them strong and good. He was born old, of course; but he was also born wise and good-tempered. He never fascinates women, but he never wearies them. We accept him far too much as a matter of course. That is because he is so modest. Somehow one can't conceive of him as having married, and yet I dare say he would have made a model husband—he is a man of such magnificent silences. What more could any sane woman desire?"

A few days later, Lady Ursula paid him one of the morning visits that her business relations with his firm rendered now and then compulsory. His private apartment, opening from a series of offices in a side-street off

the Strand, was so plain that you were apt to forget its solid elegance. Through one broad bow-window the Thames was always visible. After she had signed one or two papers and listened to certain explanations regarding proposed investments, the young widow went to this window and stared out on the sunny, crinkling river. Suddenly she swept around, and said, with a touch of self-reproach:

"Oh, I'm taking up your valuable time. I must go, must I not?"

Seated beside his huge, document-strewn desk, Heath Hammond glanced up at the clock which hung directly above it.

"I've twenty minutes yet," he said. "What else can I do for you? Would you like that envelope opened?"

## VI

At these calm words, Ursula uttered a little, impatient cry. "How many times shall I have to tell you that I don't care a button about the envelope? Dear Mr. Hammond, I know but too well what it contains—an entreaty that I shall not marry again. That was the incessant trouble with Jasper; he had a feeling that, if anything happened to him, I might marry again. I'm glad Aunt Anne doesn't know that he left the sealed package in connection with the will. Then she, too, would have bothered me about opening it."

"I don't wish to bother you, Lady Ursula," said the lawyer. "But on it is written, 'To be opened by my wife after I am dead'; and there seems a kind of irreverence in keeping it sealed so long."

She tapped one hand with her sheathed fan. "I'm not irreverent," she said.

"It may contain something important."

"I've told you," she threw back, with a most unusual petulance, "that I know quite well just what it contains. My life with Jasper wasn't happy—I've told you that, also. But in so many of our discordant hours he would

keep up that one harsh strain—about my taking another husband in the event of his death! Now, please don't again refer——"

But the rest of the sentence died on her lips. He was looking at her with such gravity and yet such keenness that she felt as if some sudden force had deprived her of speech.

Watching him, she saw complete incredulity in his placid eyes. "It will not do, Lady Ursula," he presently said. "You must excuse me, but this is not your true reason."

She tried to look indignant, and forlornly failed. "Well?" she faltered, standing beside his chair, pierced with a sudden shame at her falsehood.

"Your real reason," continued Heath Hammond, "is your extraordinary belief that Mr. Garth still lives."

He rose and slowly followed her, as she again swerved toward the window. Gazing once more at the scintillant river, she said, brokenly:

"It isn't a belief; it's—it's a feeling."

"Your husband is unquestionably dead. There is not one chance in a million that he survived."

She turned almost fiercely, facing him. "No one saw him die."

Hammond shook his head. "The evidence was plain that the *Carpentaria* had only time to man one boat. The ship went down with terrible speed. Everybody in the small boat saw it go down, and the evidence of everybody was thoroughly examined by the most competent jurists."

Ursula scanned the rough, tranquil, honest face at her side. Then her eyes dropped, and she muttered, with a certain dull stubbornness:

"Oh, well, open the envelope yourself, if that's your wish. I give you full permission."

Heath Hammond went back to his desk and stood there, for a moment, softly fumbling with some of the looser papers that overspread it. Soon he spoke quietly over one shoulder:

"Will you give me such permission in writing?"

"Yes," she answered; and, drawing

off one glove, she hurried toward the desk, seating herself in the lawyer's chair. She then wrote three or four sentences quickly at his dictation, and signed them. "There," she announced, quitting the chair again, with a relieved backward fling of the head; "now you can open it whenever you please."

"This is encouraging," he said, with the flicker of a smile on his short-bearded lips. "The next thing to opening it yourself was to let some one else do so. Before long, I trust, we shall have the last fragment of a cobweb swept out of your brain."

She threw both hands into the air, with a prettiness of gesture that did not prevent it from being a sadness.

"Well, and when the highly healthful change does come—when the bee is out of my bonnet, and all that—you and Aunt Anne and the old duchess and plenty of other people will expect me to 'make a selection.' This is what I really came here to say. Aunt Anne, who never scolds me, has come nearer to it, lately, than ever before. She thinks that I should dismiss Melville Barclay, dismiss Pemberton Dalgrish. She considers it wrong of me to let them continue their devotions. Perhaps she is right; but would it not be positively wicked if I married one of them, not loving him?"

Heath Hammond cleared his throat. "But—can that be possible?" he asked, lingeringly, in his most solemn tone, as though he were interrogating a witness.

"Oh, now you're going to argue me into a conviction that I'm truly fond of one of them!" She looked like the comedy of resignation, as she drew herself up and crossed her hands on her breast. "Which one have I wrongly persuaded myself that I don't love well enough to bear his name? Which am I entirely mistaken in fancying that I don't adore? Kindly inform me at once, and settle my suspense."

"Oh, this is a lawyer's office," returned her listener, with all his good-

nature manifest; "not a fortune-teller's or clairvoyant's."

Even while she talked with him, now satiric and whimsical, now earnest and anxious, now varying quite visibly between smiles and tears, now calling herself a weather-vane and anon blaming others that they should denounce her instability—at this same time, as it chanced, Lord Melville Barclay found himself face to face with an adventure.

He had always disliked Tottenham Court Road, holding it, like most Englishmen of his class, a thoroughfare combining much thrift with more vulgarity. For the coarseness of poverty he had sincere compassion; for the crudeness of shop-keeping prosperity he cherished not a little contempt. Driven in a cab through this noisy and flaring quarter, he asked himself if Goodge street, one of its tributaries, might not be less common in one sense and far more pathetic in another. He had ordered his driver to land him at a certain house there, and when he reached his destination the prevailing shabbiness pierced him with pity more acute because of a searching Summer sun.

Asking for Miss Throop, he was shown into a room on the first floor, which looked, with its daubs of oil paintings and its stuffed birds in glass cases, and its huge, impudent, gilded clock, as if it were waiting for a new Dickens to poke fun at all its glaring sins against taste.

Miss Throop did not keep him waiting long. She timidly entered, a thin creature in a dingy cotton gown, with sunken cheeks, prominent ears and beautiful, soft, gray eyes.

"Lord Barclay, I believe," she said, curtsying.

"Not Lord Barclay; I've no such dignity. Lord Melville Barclay, if you please, and nothing grander."

Miss Throop smiled, embarrassedly. "Excuse me, my lord; but we home-spun folk don't weigh the differences between you gentry of title. Yes, Lord Melville; I remember. Won't you be seated, my lord?" And she



pointed to a haircloth chair with a palpably fractured back.

"No, Miss Throop," replied her visitor, with firmness but no trace of ill-temper; "I must tell you that I prefer to stand. You sent me, a day or two since, the strangest sort of note. You requested me to call here, and stated that you had very important news to give me that might prove of great value to me, since it concerned the future of Lady Ursula Garth. Now, I must not lose time in assuring you, Miss Throop, that you had no right whatever to indulge in any such form of double reference. And I must furthermore ask you to explain at once why you did so."

The big gray eyes gave out an aggressive flash. "I was one of the survivors of the *Carpentaria*, my lord. I put that in my note."

"You made brief mention of it. I promptly recalled your name. I knew the names of all the survivors—" Here Lord Melville stopped short, and took a step in Miss Throop's direction. At the same time he pushed toward her another chair. "But you must sit," he said, with a new note of kindness in his voice; "you don't look very well."

"I ain't, my lord," whined his hostess. But she raised, at the same time, a protesting hand, and he recognized but too clearly the deferential spirit of the English lower middle classes.

"Oh, all right," he said, and took the chair she had offered him. Then Miss Throop sank, half-cringingly, into that which he had offered her.

She rested her spare arms on the round dining-table that now made a slight arc between them, and leaned toward him.

"My lord," she presently wavered, as though obsessed by some burden of tidings too heavy and ample for anything save loitering delivery, "I—I asked you to come because I've had it on my mind and wanted to get it off."

Lord Melville knew men well. He did not know women as thoroughly, but

he knew them. A peculiar thrill passed through him now; he always remembered it, for he afterward had copious cause to make it the first milestone in the stretch of a certain mental and moral roadway.

"Had what on your mind?" he rather brusquely asked; "and what have you wished to get off it?"

"This," answered Miss Throop, devouring his face almost melodramatically with the shining, wide-lidded eyes. "I—I saw Mr. Jasper Garth die. Yes, I saw him from the boat. He was standing very near the broken part of the deck, where the other ship had ploughed a great gap. He was talking with some one, and stepped back. He fell straight into the water. Mercy! I can see it now!" She lifted both bony arms, and waved them. "Nobody helped him; nobody seemed to notice—there was such wild confusion, you know, on the *Carpentaria*. The sea swung us away, but still I saw him from the small boat. I was going to say, 'Look, look! there's the great Australian millionaire drowning!' But I—I must have been scared dumb. He rose once, and a wave struck him. I thought he wouldn't come up again. The fog, you know, was bad, awful bad; but somehow there was a space round the spot where he'd sunk. And then I saw him come up again. He stretched one hand out of the water. I think everybody else must have been looking at the big ship, for she was going down quite fast. But I strained my eyes to catch another glimpse of him. And I did. He'd risen for the third time, just as they say drowning people always do. But it was only a mere flash of a white face. It disappeared, and just as a kind of horrible good-bye feeling for the poor lost gentleman began a-tugging at my heart, all of a sudden the fog turned thick as tar."

"H'm!" said Lord Melville, after the silence had grown a little. "And that was the end, I suppose?"

"His end, my lord? Oh, yes! I thought every minute ours would

come. We seemed to fall down a great hole in the sea, and the yells from the ship got fainter. Then the hole would swell up into a mountain, and we tottered on top of it, waiting to fall off. You know how long that lasted, my lord. I didn't mean to speak about anything except the—*the* certainty that Mr. Jasper Garth is dead."

"And you've told me," thought Lord Melville, "a very prettily concocted lie. And why the devil you've done it," his reflections proceeded, "I'm quite at a loss to conjecture."

Aloud he returned, quite off-handedly: "I say, Miss Throop, what motive had you for concealing this fact so long?"

## VII

THE woman fingered at a button on the front of her untidy gown. "Motive, my lord?" she tossed back, though not disrespectfully. "La! I got frightened—and no wonder, with all those questions the lawyers kept putting. And they had such cold-blooded ways with 'em. I was afraid they'd laugh me down if I let out all I'd seen."

"Laugh you down? Why should they?"

He was curt with her, and could scarcely veil his disgust. She perceived something of this, and her demeanor grew insecure. She bit her lips and scanned her prominent knuckles. She forgot to answer his question, or perhaps feared to do so. Her fine eyes no longer sought his face; their gaze wandered; they seemed to have become like weapons that have lost efficacy and hence are held in listless clasp.

"You're a poor dissembler, Miss Throop," her guest presently averred. "I do not believe a word of your story, and I am sure that you have been urged to fabricate it by some foolish adviser." His eyes for a moment swept the room, taking in its various repellent details. Then they returned to her disarrayed face,

and remained there fixedly. "Now, tell me—I insist that you tell me—how you came to communicate these fresh tidings, whether true or false, to me as your chosen hearer."

"You—frighten—me, my lord," she stammered, turning pale. "I—didn't expect——"

"That I would see through your humbug so speedily?" She became tremulous, at this, and burst into tears. He watched her with steadiness for a little while, and found himself sincerely pitying her. His next words were much softer, and by degrees he won from her the real truth.

She had been ill, and had a younger sister in the Middlesex Hospital near by. She had lost her place as saleswoman with a Tottenham Court Road linen-draper, and her savings had begun to ebb at a rate that terrified. Eliza Todd, formerly Lady Ursula's maid, had counseled her to send the letter and trump up the sensational story. She had acted, of course, from a desperate hope of securing money. Eliza had assured her that Lady Ursula was kept from marrying one of two gentlemen, each of whom was longing to become her husband, through fear that Mr. Garth might still be alive. One of these was "a lord," and very rich. Eliza had thought it most probable that he stood higher in the favor of her late mistress; and so Miss Throop had begun her deceptive plans.

Lord Melville rose and walked to the door, after this rather ridiculous confession terminated.

"You've been a very foolish person, Miss Throop," he said. Then a generous impulse seized him, born of thorough belief in the woman's poverty-stricken state. She was now struggling pathetically with her sobs and tears, and looked wan and faint as she stretched out imploring hands.

"Oh, please, my lord, have mercy on me! Don't have me arrested! I——" She could speak no further.

"Have you arrested!" exclaimed Lord Melville, returning to her side and laying a hand momentarily on her frail,

shaking shoulder. "Don't dream of such a thing! You've been woefully silly, but I don't doubt that Eliza Todd is more to blame than you. Here!" He tossed a sovereign on the table. "If you'd gone to Lady Ursula simply as one of the survivors in that horrible shipwreck, she might have aided you very substantially. But this wicked dalliance with Eliza Todd is quite a different affair. I recollect her perfectly. She was discharged because of laziness, fits of intemperance and suspected dishonesty."

He went back again to the door, while hearing Miss Throop's grateful cry as she clutched the sovereign. He was about to open the door and pass quietly out of the house when something detained him. He did not quite realize, at first, that this something was a temptation.

His hand had grasped the door-knob, but now it dropped limply away. Once more he retraced his steps. Miss Throop turned her tearful face toward him. He saw her fingers tighten about the coin, as though she dreaded he might reclaim it.

"Thank you, my lord," she piped, uneasily; "thank you very much, and I hope it's a sign of your forgiveness."

He was looking at her with great attention, while he twirled between thumb and finger an end of his blond mustache.

"You told your story quite badly," he said, with a sort of musing, self-centred air.

She started, surprised by an unexpected note in his voice.

"Do you think," he went on, "that you could learn to tell it any better if I—" he paused, and the color faded from his cheeks; then, boldly, collectedly—"if I were to give you a few lessons, Miss Throop?"

"A few lessons!"

As she gasped out these words, a divination of his meaning broke upon her. She staggered weakly to her feet and gave a low but wild laugh, that seemed all the more strange because of those large tear-blotches on her white face.

## VIII

"PEMBY DALGRISH isn't looking at all well," affirmed the Duchess of Down to Mrs. Aylesbury. "Has Ursula been treating him to any sort of severe shock?"

The younger lady smiled. "If she's refused him for the fiftieth time, I can't say. But why should it be any more of a shock than the forty-ninth?"

"Or the second, for that matter," growled her grace. "If I were a man, no matter how madly I adored a woman, I should never ask her more than twice to marry me. It's very much like scrambling for a card to some place where one has not been asked. Say what you please, all pushers are vulgar."

"If you're going to call true love by any such horrid names, I can only respond that you've shown me the first sign of having lost your perennial youth."

"Perennial fiddlesticks, Anne! Thank heaven, I don't pose as anything but a withered old crone who eats, drinks, gossips and gambles. Those two men are both idiots to dance as they do at Ursula's fiddling. They ought to be whipped into shape *à bâtons rompus*. True love, as you term it, is all very pretty and pictorial; but that's no excuse for making ducks and drakes of our dignity."

"And you say that Dalgrish does not look well?"

"Shockingly ill. At the Montagu-Prangs' dinner, last night, he sat next me, with a spectral cheek and a glazed eye. He talked little and ate less."

Dalgrish, beyond doubt, had felt in no mood for dining. But no one dreamed of the real reason for that change in him, which many had observed at the Montagu-Prangs' rather multitudinous feast. He had gone there detesting the necessity of being obliged to do so. But the engagement was sacred, and he dared not, at so late an hour, concoct some excuse which would only end in giving offense.

A few days before, Parliament had closed. He had seldom missed show-



ing himself in the House at all its sessions, and now, in the new leisure afforded him, he found certain business affairs awaiting his immediate heed. One of these he had attempted that same morning to exploit. It concerned a block of very small houses—those tiny houses, two rooms deep and two stories high, occupied by thousands of the poorer London folk. This valuable property, situated on the "Surrey side," his father had left to Dalgrish, and the rents drawn from it were an appreciable factor in his income. But he had always been conscientious with regard to its management, and he now journeyed in a cab across Waterloo Bridge for the purpose of discussing, with a superintendent who dwelt on the premises, some recent complaints on the part of the tenants.

At the end of his drive he carelessly dismissed the cab which had borne him thither, forgetting the fact that a return vehicle in this remote district would be impossible to secure.

It was high noon when he succeeded in finding the superintendent, and their meeting was then a matter of much storm and stress. Dalgrish seldom lost his temper, but he could strike harder blows on this account; and he struck hard ones now. Staines, the man whom he had trusted as an employee, received them in forlorn silence. Inwardly, it pained Dalgrish to verify, as he did, the accusations brought against this most faultful of stewards. One by one he visited various homes on the street, forcing Staines to accompany him. Everywhere the same unanswerable story was told. Bullying, extortion, periods of shameful intemperance, neglect of rational requests and demands, disobedience of precepts long ago made clear as the very basis of the agent's official tenure—the whole revelation turned Dalgrish sick as it grew upon him by stern and dismal degrees.

A salubrious morning had become a sultry afternoon before his disquieting investigations had ceased. He turned at last from his wearisome

task, having promised the tenants all reasonable consideration of their requirements. Most of them were women with husbands away at work, and not a few were hysteric in their querulous outcries. He left Staines—a stout, florid man, with beady eyes and a loose-hanging mouth—in throes of severe, if somewhat factitious, remorse.

He walked angrily away, down the hot, ugly thoroughfare. Soon he comprehended the utter hopelessness of securing a cab, and then he bethought himself of the underground railway; no doubt one of its stations could not be far off. He stopped a flushed woman with a baby in her arms. The nearest station, he learned to his dismay, was almost a mile distant.

After a rather protracted stroll, he perceived that the street had assumed a less depraved air. At length he confronted a large public-house, which rose with an almost palatial massiveness from its humbler surroundings. "They might give me a sandwich here," he thought, and boldly opened one of the doors that seemed to guard an interior set apart for better-class custom.

The barmaid started with surprise on seeing him enter. She had served in West End places, and knew instantly that he could not be a resident of this transpontine region. Dalgrish, after seating himself at a table, and waiting at least ten good minutes, was served with three of the worst ham sandwiches that fate had thus far called upon him to devour. Meanwhile, he surveyed the small apartment in which he sat. It was gaudily clad in gilt and crimson papering, and suggested, with its ornate gas-jets and its velvety emerald carpet, a somewhat expensive outlay. Beyond it was a draped doorway; evidently a second apartment lay yonder, at one end of which the bar and its gay-glittering rear buffet curved, just as they did in this. Dalgrish had seen the same cozy and loud-hued haunts in more thriving parts of London, and it now struck him that, to judge by

these dapper internal presentments, he might be lunching in some resort not far from Oxford Circus. But this was very far, and he had a dreary sense of the distance, as he rose and tossed upon the counter a ten-shilling piece. While the barmaid was changing it, he moved toward the threshold of the other room, and carelessly peered between the parted curtains.

This room was smaller than its companion, and appointed in much the same tasteless yet comfortable style. It contained but two tables, and at the further one sat a man, in a lounging attitude, with a glass of some half-consumed liquid at his side. The man's eyes were fixed steadily on a point before him, and both hands lay half-clasped in his lap. Dalgrish, on perceiving him, was about to recede, when something in the profile and the poise of head gave him pause.

He advanced several steps, unconscious of the act. Roused from his abstraction, the man turned and looked him full in the face.

"My God!" said Dalgrish, below his breath. "It's you, Jasper Garth—you, alive, like this!"

A faintness, for the first time in his life, overcame him. He caught the back of a chair that stood opposite him, and staggered a little while he held it.

The man slowly rose. They faced each other, with a deep, mutual stare. For several moments not a word passed between them.

## IX

A FEW days later Lady Ursula left an "at home" in Belgravia and walked toward her own residence in Upper Grosvenor street. At her side sauntered Lord Melville.

"The season has begun to wane," she said, "and I intend to wane as well."

"All of which will mean about the same thing," he answered.

"Not for everybody."

"For some one whom I know, most certainly."

She ignored this. "Yes, Aunt Anne and I have resolved to leave town next week."

His face fell. "You're going to your seat in Warwickshire?"

"No; we've decided upon Trevor Court."

"Ah, so near!" he smiled, with evident relief. Trevor Court was an enchanting place owned by Mrs. Aylesbury, on the Thames, not far from Taplow. "Will you be there long?" he went on.

"Till September, surely. Then, if Aunt Anne requires it, we shall go to Marienbad."

"Ah! So I shall have you close at hand for some time yet, anyway."

"Your sentence has a rather proprietary sound."

"Proprietary? Yours has a wounding sound! Think, Ursula"—he leaned as near to her as he dared—"how sweet to celebrate your departure by the announcement of our—betrothal!"

"Those pink clouds over yonder—are they not exquisite?" she murmured. "They hang directly above the Marble Arch, I should say."

"Yes," he replied, with a gay dryness. "How emblematic! The Arch means triumph, you know."

"But we don't see it; it's too far off."

"We can divine it, however. At least, I do. And the pink clouds—they make one think of Tennyson's lines, after *Maud* has consented:

" ' Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West;  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.' "

Lady Ursula perceptibly quickened her pace. "Rather a tedious jingle, I've always thought, set in the heart of a most beautiful poem."

"But it describes a lover's rapture. It would symbolize mine."

She made no response, and, after a slight silence, he spoke with new tones whose vehemence was quite untinged by sentiment. "You told me to-day

at the Desboroughs' that you had been having some pleasant talks with Heath Hammond of late. A strikingly sensible man is Hammond; just the sort of person to banish from your mind a certain odd hallucination. Did you chance to mention—your husband? Or did he do so?"

She turned her look upon him; it swept his face suspiciously. "I talk with Heath Hammond on many subjects. He is like an old glove, so easy and *commode*. He would not stab one," she went on, a hurt ring in her voice, "with so contemptuous a word as 'hallucination.'"

"Pardon me, Ursula! I take back the word. But what would you say if I could give you distinct proof that your husband died that day on the *Carpentaria*?"

Again she looked full at him, this time with a strong, plaintive search in her wondrously lovely eyes. Her pace slackened. "Distinct proof?" she repeated.

All men of honor suffer when they contemplate the possible toleration of a lie. But they suffer tenfold more keenly when the moment arrives at which a lie shall be taken into their lives and made an impetus of future action. Lord Melville felt that he grew pale under the gaze of this adorable woman, for whom he was soiling himself with the first ignoble smirch that had ever tainted his record.

"I know some one," he said, "who is prepared to tell you that she saw your husband die."

"Die—saw him die?"

Ursula, for an instant, caught the speaker's arm. But her clasp quickly left it, and she stood motionless beside him, with an air of inquiry, disciplined yet desperate.

"You take it most seriously," Lord Melville blurted forth.

"Why not? why not?" she retorted, her eyes riveted on his face. Her cheeks were touched with scarlet and her chin was tremulous, but there came a swift resumption of calmness.

"You have some news, then?" she

presently queried; "some proof, I mean?"

"Yes." And he mentioned Miss Throop's name as they again continued their walk.

"Miss Throop!" she exclaimed, with almost a sneer. "I heard long ago every word that *she* had to tell! And, somehow, of all the survivors, I pitied her least. She always seemed to me insincere, untrustworthy."

"But you did not doubt her story?"

"Oh, no! Still, it contained nothing of any particular moment. She merely saw what others saw."

Lord Melville's nerves were steadier, now. He had taken his first plunge; the inevitable sense of repulsion and self-disgust had followed. This he had expected, and had feared besides, half-doubtful if some impetuous rush of compunction might not tempt him to fling over his entire deceptive plan. He knew, now, that he would persevere in it with unrelaxing stress.

"Miss Throop," he said, calmly and evenly, "saw a great deal more than anybody else in the boat; and she is prepared to give you a full account of her observations, far clearer than those of the others, because she was less agitated at the time, having no child or relation to guard or comfort. All the other women, as you may perhaps remember, were in this respect differently placed."

"Yes," his hearer assented, "that is quite true. But why should Miss Throop speak more openly now than she did when we met months ago?"

He was quite prepared for this; he was, indeed, prepared for every endangering development. He had studied out his entire plan, as though it were some affair of statesmanship which his nimble and practised intellect had set itself ably to master.

"The woman," he answered, "felt timid and embarrassed in your presence. That, probably, is why you thought her insincere."

Lady Ursula gave a skeptic laugh. "I certainly did not notice either timidity or embarrassment. I asked her three or four direct questions. She

replied to them with seemingly entire self-possession. Her general manner conveyed to me no idea of falsehood. No, it was not that. I thought her a person—perhaps incorrectly—whom I should not care to trust."

They had crossed Park Lane by this time, and had reached the head of Upper Grosvenor street. Bewilderment or curiosity had caused Ursula to repress the briskness of her steps, and they now moved along at a loitering pace.

Her watcher had accepted his part; he forthwith proceeded to play it. "But can you not understand that this woman held back the whole truth from motives of mercy toward you?"

"Mercy toward me!" was her soft exclamation.

"Surely. She saw much more than she told you. She was really the only woman in the boat whom fright had not reduced almost to idiocy. And as for Reuben Creech, he was in an almost demented state at the realization of his awful responsibility, after the other sailor, who was to join him in any possible effort with the oars, had tumbled into the sea."

"But you spoke of mercy toward me, Melville."

"Why should poor, ignorant Throop not have felt it? Ah, you've called her insincere! In her silence I admit that she was. What could have been more natural? Did she suppose it would not give you great pain to hear from her that she had seen your husband die?"

Ursula grew pale as the knot of white roses on the breast of her violet gown. "Then—she saw—him die?"

"Yes."

"You believe her?"

"Absolutely."

She scanned his face. "When did you see her?"

"Very recently."

"Why did you see her?"

"I suspected that you had not yet learned the truth."

"You sought her out, then?"

"Yes."

"And in London—this vast sea of people—you found her?"

"I found her," he said, with perfect firmness; "why not? The name isn't a common one. There is a London directory, you know."

He had fronted her little storm of questions with unflawed serenity. To wear the mask grew easier for him each moment.

"But why did you specially seek out this one woman from among all the others?" Ursula persisted.

Without a hint of hesitation, he said: "The others were scattered about, in various parts of the country. Miss Throop, as I discovered, lived in London."

"You did seek her out, then?"

"Yes."

"With what motive?"

"Oh, as if you didn't know, Ursula!"

"You thought there might be some concealed evidence, like this?"

"I thought so. The hope, I admit, seemed a forlorn one. But I've gained my reward; that is, my first reward. It's for you, dearest, knowing yourself beyond all dream of doubt Jasper Garth's widow, to pay me back in different, yet far more precious coin!"

Again she turned toward him, slightly lifting one hand. "Ah, it's lucky, Melville, that I know you to be the soul of honor!" As he flushed violently, a thrill of penitence assailed her, for she at once concluded that he had colored from indignation alone. "Pardon me," she went on; "I could never, even remotely, fancy that you wouldn't fight fair."

These words were coals of fire to him. But their very sting reacted goad-wise on his perturbed courage. "Why call it a fight?" he asked. "On my part it is so tremendously opposite from that! Indeed, it's the struggle to secure an armistice, a truce, an absolute peace—the peace that will come to us both, I trust, when, by consenting to bear my name, Ursula, you've made me the happiest man alive."

Unresponsive, she strolled along at his side, until they presently reached her dwelling. Here she paused, and,

with a matter-of-fact quietude, spoke again:

"Is it your wish that I see this Miss Throop?"

"Is it not yours?" he replied, adroitly mingling surprise with reproach.

"But if I fail to believe her story——?"

"You will believe it," he said, showing so deft a simulation of entire confidence that the gold in her strangely beautiful dark eyes kindled vividly. "When you have seen her as she is now, when you have heard her as she speaks now, you must believe it!"

She slowly inclined her head. "Well, I will see her. Shall it be here, at my home?"

"At hers."

"Hers? Where is that?"

He told her.

"I don't know that street," she said. "Near Tottenham Court Road? Oh, yes; in the Middlesex Hospital region, I suppose. I've been there; I know more or less where you mean."

"Naturally. Is there a woman who visits the poor oftener than you and Mrs. Aylesbury—that is, when your poor aunt can get about at all?"

"Hush!" she reproved. "Our charities, our visits to the sick and destitute, are nothing compared with those of many another Englishwoman in our world. And you wish me to go with you and see Miss Throop? When?"

"To-morrow, at eleven, if you will. We'll drive there quietly in a cab. And may I beg of you to let this whole matter be a secret between ourselves?"

She deliberated. "I'm not even to tell Aunt Anne?"

"Not even her. Will you promise?" he pleaded.

"Well, yes."

"Will you promise sacredly, Ursula?"

She gave several quick nods. "Oh, yes; I promise sacredly. I won't even tell Heath Hammond!"

"Heath Hammond! Good heavens, do you tell him everything?"

She laughed. "He's my counselor, you know, in so many ways. I bring him all my complaints, all my troubles, as if he were a father. Sometimes, I think he doesn't listen to them all."

"To-morrow, then, at eleven. I'll call in a cab at eleven sharp. You're not going to any of the festal things to-night?"

"I think not—after what you've just been saying." She held out her hand, let it linger in his for the briefest instant, and then turned away. Immediately, he heard the sharpest rat-tat-tat sound at the shining door-knocker. "Go, I must think," it seemed to command him; and he passed onward toward the large open space of Grosvenor Square, surrounded by lordly mansions and holding, rail-circled and almost tower-like at its centre, the intertangled verdures of high, full-foliaged trees.

The very drama of his duplicity had thus far numbed conscience. But now it woke, vitalized by solitude. Still again must it wage the immemorial mental battle. Passion must break a lance with it. "A lie is a lie," urged Conscience; but Passion returned, with precipitate self-exculpation: "I make for myself my own pathway, since fate balks me with, 'No thoroughfare!'"

## X

LADY URSULA, on the following morning, was prepared to keep her promise. Mrs. Aylesbury, accustomed to her goings and comings, asked no questions. Seated in a back room, with a new novel that engaged her, the elder lady looked up at her niece for a moment as the latter transiently appeared, and then glanced at a near clock on the mantel. "Eleven. You're going out? You'll be back for luncheon, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes."

Then Ursula went out and found Lord Melville waiting in his cab. They at once drove off together.



Miss Throop had been drilled so forcibly and skilfully that her recital was a marvel of hypocrisy. A cleverer woman would have enacted her rôle with less convincing effect. But she was just stupid enough, just ignorant enough, just enough penetrated by the sordid sense of rich future guerdon, to hug with slavish obedience the exact lines of her previous careful tuition.

Lord Melville had prepared her for every emergency in the way of radical questioning. She told her tale, and she told it like a witness who neither invited nor anticipated negation. But attempts at negation came on the part of Ursula, came with searching interrogatory, came with even occasional revealed desire to trip her up, confuse her, confound her, make her swerve from this statement and feebly nullify that. Silent, unmoving, Lord Melville noted the rigor of this cross-examination. So stringent, now and then, was the ordeal that he trembled for his pupil's equanimity. But he trusted, nevertheless, in the efficacy of his past teachings. They had been all over this sort of thing together, he kept telling himself, again and again. There was no chess-like trick on Ursula's part that he had not foreseen at rehearsals.

To-day, Miss Throop's attire was both clean and neat, while her hair, which she had carefully brushed, hid the more startling outlines of her aggressive ears. The great, limpid gray eyes which formed so anomalous a feature of her coarse face, veiled their bolder rays with a demureness that matched well her low-voiced replies. Melville Barclay had not only tutored her in the matter of what to say, but he had shown her how to say it and how to look while it was said.

The young woman—while he cloaked keen observance of her behind an air of ordinary regard—aroused in him something strongly like admiration. True, her cause was a sinister one, but she upheld it, with surpassing tact and craft. Never,

after all was said, had instruction fallen upon a more adaptive disciple.

At last, Ursula deserted her forensic posture. It was plain that she no longer doubted. Yes, Miss Throop had seen her husband die! This admission seemed stamped upon her face with an unmistakable emphasis as she left the house in Goodge street.

Their cab was waiting, and, just before they entered it, he asked her what order he should give the driver. "Home," she at once answered.

While they were being rattled westward, he suddenly said, with a rueful inflection:

"You don't seem overjoyed."

"I'm amazed," she gave out, shortly.

"But you're convinced?"

"Yes; how can I help but be convinced? By the way, should I not have offered Miss Throop something? Did she not expect it? I—I forgot."

"She didn't expect it. I've helped her, in a moderate way." He still kept warily on his guard. "Nothing in the least extravagant. She's poor, and the sewing that she takes in doesn't count for a great deal. Nevertheless, I don't believe that people should receive handsome bounties for simply telling the truth. Am I not right?"

"Perfectly right."

They were speeding through Wigmore street, when he again spoke. "Ursula, you accept the truth, now. It is irresistibly broken upon you. This evening my cousin, Mrs. Yorke, has a small dinner—a kind of family affair—at her house in Hill street. May I not tell her—may I not let her make it quietly known among the other guests that our engagement has become a fact?"

She turned and looked at him, her softly splendid eyes dwelling not so much on his handsome face as on the entire presentment which he made of fine, patrician distinction. It came into her mind that, after all, he possessed personal graces and favors far beyond the mental

wealth, the elusive yet magnetic gift of Dalgrish. He would appear before the world as her wiser and more felicitous choice. He had, besides, a great Parliamentary future. She did not love him, but she intensely liked him. And he had attested his own love by a pertinacity of courtship whose recent proof affected her with an actual clamor of protest. Why not answer him once and for all, here and now, with the word for which his brilliant blue eyes flashed their eager yearning? After all, it had been a race between himself and Dalgrish, and he had fairly won. Everybody had been expecting for months that she would make some sort of final decision between these two. Moreover, he was rich, independently rich, and Dalgrish had far less lucre than he. If she married him, it could never be said that her own fortune, large as it was, had acted in the least way as a lure. She had not been happy with Jasper Garth, but there seemed every chance that she would be very contented with Lord Melville Barclay. To her husband she had given only friendship, and he had incessantly wearied her by seeking to convert it into love. On this other she would bestow friendship as well, but with a confidence, born of long previous acquaintanceship, that he would receive it with triumphant yet humble gratitude. Did she not, by this time, know all the crannies and crevices of his singularly sweet character? Dalgrish had his fascinations, but he also had his crepuscular moods. She had never quite solved him. Matrimonially, she had gathered, he might not wear well. He was like a shore with bold, sunny heights and yet with darksome caverns. But Melville? Was he not a lake, blue as his own lucid eyes, and comfortably stormless? She felt her lips tremble with the unuttered word.

"Ursula!" he said, and slipped his hand covertly toward hers, gently crushing it within his clasp. "You consent? We are engaged?"

"Yes," she replied.

## XI

"It's a pleasant disappointment," declared the Duchess of Down two days later to Mrs. Aylesbury. "You wish to seem non-committal, Anne, but I can see in your face that you think your pet has chosen discreetly."

"I always liked Melville," was the soft answer.

"Of course," grunted her grace; "but, then, you always like everybody. You're the only person, not a nonentity, who does. You even like me. I'm universally hated by all with whom I come in contact, except your beaming self."

"Don't say that, Grace!"

"Why not? I've two grandchildren who loathe me, and seven or eight cousins who would like to cut me, but don't dare. Still, after all, I've my consolations. If I'm hated, I'm also feared. Fear is a splendid sceptre. I enjoy wielding it, too, in this wicked world!"

Mrs. Aylesbury smiled, very faintly. "By the way, Grace, I must thank you very much for that superb cheque you sent me yesterday. I've obeyed your instructions, though with much regret. I only wish that I could tell two or three of the good women who watch over that Asylum for Blind Orphans how nobly you've sympathized with their work."

"Bah!" scoffed her grace; "let's talk of more important things. We began with Melville Barclay's engagement to Ursula. Everybody is asking what Pemby Dalgrish will do. Have you or your niece seen him yet?"

Nobody, in a social sense, had yet seen Dalgrish. Lady Ursula had thought best to write him a short note, telling of her betrothal. It was carefully worded, and seemed to hint, though with much delicacy, that an answer would be needless.

A day later, Dalgrish left town, and passed more than a fortnight in strict seclusion on a small estate which he owned, not far from the Sussex coast. Here the London papers reached him, and in one of them he read the formal

announcement of "a marriage having been arranged" between Ursula and Lord Melville. By another, several days afterward, he was informed that Ursula and her aunt had quitted London for Trevor Court, "Mrs. Aylesbury's Summer residence on the Thames, not far from Taplow."

When he returned to town, August had begun, and all gaieties had vanished from roads and squares of the West End, leaving lines of torpid houses, long stretches of deserted streets. He had gone away like a wounded animal when hiding itself to lick its hurts. But in this dismal process he had found slight relief. Melville, he kept telling himself, had stolen a march on him; but how, and why? His political fighters had always admitted that Dalgrish possessed great nerve. This power of rigid outward control stayed with him now. He felt that he could face life and society once more, and he inflexibly meant to do so.

He had for months past believed that, if it ever came to a positive issue between himself and Lord Melville, he would prove the winning man. But he had always meant to fight fair, and now he was tortured with a conviction of treachery.

And yet had treachery really been employed against him? Would Lord Melville stoop to it? And of what nature, provided this were true, could it possibly be? Had it concerned some revelation to Lady Ursula on the subject of her husband? This was the most natural supposition, and yet what revelation of this sort had Melville Barclay the power to make?

Dalgrish, on the first evening after his arrival in London, strolled into one of his clubs. A few men whom he knew greeted him. He joined their small circle, and almost at once felt that the air was impregnated with pity. He strove to speak with liveliness, even jollity, and yet found no response. The men would have laughed and joked with him if they could, but a spell stiffened their lips. Dalgrish divined the whole truth, and went

home that night with a heart full of new disquiet.

"I feel in my soul that I shall be saved!" More than once had Ursula told him of how those words, heard by Reuben Creech just before he himself left the *Carpentaria*, had sometimes a trick of ringing in her ears for hours. When they had last seen each other, there was not a sign that these same haunting words had ceased to visit her, that she did not still continue the slave of her delusion. And, while this delusion lasted, there had always been the pungent uncertainty as to her future marriage. Had Melville Barclay abruptly killed it? And, if so, by what means? "The whole catastrophe," he kept telling himself, "has been so sprung upon me!" He knew at least twenty women sufficiently well to seek them and ask them what gossip they had heard respecting this curiously dynamic occurrence. Many, of course, had disappeared from town, though others no doubt remained. And yet on none could he bring himself to pay a visit. Pride stood in the way.

Still, he yearned for some sort of definite information. At times, he found himself burning with such acute wrath against Lord Melville that he dreaded the consequences of their chance meeting. Yet he faced this probability by dining three or four nights in succession at a certain Pall Mall club, which they had both frequented for some time past. Here, one evening, he met a second cousin, Mr. Ommanney Firth.

Firth was a gay man-about-town, with a slender figure, a slender little whitish-gold mustache, a slender mind and a very stout purse. He looked upon Dalgrish as one of the greatest men in England, and liked nothing better than to prophesy, at the big dinners he would give in his delightful Green-street home—where a slender little wife, with an intellect even slenderer than his own, usually presided—that "dear old Pemby" would one day be Prime Minister.

"This thing is a bombshell to every-



body," he now said, in swift, impetuous whisper. "She never gave a soul the faintest intimation of what she was intending to do. Lily is furious, as I needn't tell you. We haven't got a scrap of real news, don't you know? We imagine that, of course, you received some sort of—excuse me—*cong  *. She must have seen you, or written."

"She wrote," said Dalgrish. Ommanney Firth always bored him, and, if it had not been for the ties of blood, he would now have snubbed him off his feet. Moreover, a certain thought had entered his mind. "You're down there, now, at Combethorpe?" he asked, quickly.

"Yes; we've been down for ten days or so," answered Firth.

Combethorpe was a lovely place whose shaded lawns verged upon the river, and one which this millionaire kinsman would sometimes keep shut up for a year, and then open, with all luxurious pomps and dignities, as he had done of late.

"Trevor Court," continued Firth, "is quite near. We've met Lady Ursula and Lord Melville rowing on the river, several times. Lily was almost bent on cutting them, at first, but she realized the nonsense of that."

"And very wisely," offered Dalgrish, low in his throat.

"But she hasn't called, though we were there first. Melville doesn't stay at Trevor Court. He has rooms at the Raleigh Inn—you remember it?"

"Oh, perfectly." Dalgrish laid a hand on Firth's arm. "I say, Ommanney, will you take me in for a few days at Combethorpe?"

"Bless you, dear Pemby, we'll take you for all August, if you'll only come. Lily thought of Homburg, but the season here has fagged her out, and she feels too seedy to do anything—but loaf about the cottage and take occasional drives and boatings."

"Cottage!" ruminated Dalgrish, gruffly; "it's a great rambling palace."

"Built of wood, though," said Firth, humbly. He had always the good sense not to praise his own superb

possessions either in country or town. "Come, dear fellow, and stay till you're tired of us. Only, don't bring a pistol."

"I sha'n't," laughed Dalgrish.

He brought instead, however, a bleeding and morbid heart. Lily Firth, his hostess, had always wearied him with her platitudes, but she had never seemed to him half so endurable as now. She was profuse in her sympathies. She drove out with her guest for miles behind the pair of fleet thoroughbreds that she managed with deft ease. At such times, she would pour eulogy upon Dalgrish, underrate his successful rival in every way, and hurl scorn upon Lady Ursula.

On a certain afternoon, as it happened, they came face to face, during one of their drives, with Lady Ursula and Lord Melville. Lily had just brought her rather heated horses down to a slow walk. The river was not far away, glittering from its meadowy environs. The road wound through a sweet wilderness of white clover, and here, girt with the Midsummer music of greedy bees, the newly-betrothed pair were wandering. Lily's carriage was upon them before they knew. Their eyes were lowered, but suddenly both looked up, and then four people recognized one another with abrupt quickness.

It was not a pleasant moment for any of them. Ursula's face turned scarlet, but she bowed. Lord Melville's hand went rather crookedly up toward the brim of his straw hat. Little Mrs. Firth gnawed her lips, but inclined her head, notwithstanding. Dalgrish seemed the only self-possessed person of the four. He grew pale, but he lifted his hat with quiet security. There followed, necessarily, a brief interval, which seemed to all ten times its length. Then the Firth carriage passed on, and the sudden ordeal passed with it.

Afterward, Dalgrish lingered along at Combethorpe. A small house-party assembled there, and most of its members he knew moderately well. An idea was growing in his distressed mind, though he revealed nothing of

it either to his host or his fellow-guests. For a long while he had been fond of bicycling, and now that Lily Firth was debarred by new social duties from taking him on any more long drives, he spent several mornings in wheeling excursions about the lovely surrounding country.

He had his desire, which was backed up by a distinct design. Sometimes, he approached so near to the picturesque inn at which he had heard Lord Melville was staying, as narrowly to risk an encounter neither aimed at nor shirked. His great wish was to meet Ursula, and to meet her alone. The lawns of Trevor Court gave upon the Thames; but there were side gates to the estate, and from one of these, on a special morning, he saw her emerge.

She was perhaps a hundred yards away from him, when he first recognized her. She was coming straight toward him through a grassy expanse, wearing a big-brimmed hat that shaded her face from the glare of an unclouded sun. Her light draperies fluttered in a strong, yet caressing breeze. It seemed to him that he would have known her form and step among those of a thousand other women. On her own side—possibly because the sunlight was full in her eyes—she evidently had not recognized him at all. In a trice he dismounted from his wheel, and drew it under the shade of a cluster of elms that bordered the road. It was then that Ursula visibly perceived him; but she was already inside the grove. It flashed through Dalgrish's mind that here might be a place of appointed meeting between herself and Lord Melville. He saw her change color, as he lifted his hat.

"Good morning," he said.

"Good morning," she returned, faintly.

## XII

NEVER in the House of Commons had Dalgrish—always renowned there for his attribute of firm self-governance—shown a severer calm.

"I suppose this nice weather," he said, "has tempted you into a morning walk."

"Yes."

His eyes were full on her face. She met their gaze, unsteadily. In a certain sense, he had her at his mercy, since she was yet the prey of embarrassment.

"I am not sorry that we came across each other like this." She made a little upward movement with one hand, but he went on, coolly: "Oh, I've not any reproaches. But I have a question or two, Ursula, which I think it my right to ask."

She pressed her lips together, and gave a slight nod. "Well?" she at length brought out.

"Are you soon to marry Melville Barclay?"

"In early October," she answered.

"That is certain?"

"Yes."

"Are you now satisfied that your husband is dead?"

"Yes."

"Did Lord Melville make this plain to you?"

She looked at him haughtily for a second, but he at once laughed with sharpness, though not impolitely. "Ah, that is absurd between you and me!"

"What is absurd?" she questioned, glancing beyond him through the trees, with so nervous an air that he at once guessed whom she expected.

"Hauteur is absurd," he said, gently. "I must repeat my question."

"I will answer it only in this way," she affirmed, with worriment and defiance oddly blended. "I have accepted Lord Melville because I believe my husband to be dead."

"Then," Dalgrish shot back, "you deny that he has had any hand in this matter of your new and sudden belief?"

It was only defiance with her now. "I have given you your answer."

"Ah!" he said, with one of the cold smiles that she knew so well; "then he has produced some sort of testimony

which you have received with credence. And he has also made you promise that you will not explain its nature."

She started. The fascination of his keen intellect, always so admired, had become strong upon her during those few words.

"You've no reason to do more than guess this."

"Pardon me; I've every reason to feel certain of it. Lord Melville has played just the game I suspected. He has got somebody to tell you some sort of story. Come, now; who is the person?" He paused a brief moment. "You don't reply. It is because he has sealed your lips by a promise of silence."

"You don't know this!" she exclaimed.

"Bah! I've spent half my life in tracing human motives. It's my trade as a statesman—or politician, if you prefer. I'll even go so far as to hazard this: he has gone to one of those women who were survivors from the *Carpentaria* wreck——"

"Ah!" she cried, recoiling, frightened for an instant by this inflexible astuteness. "What are you saying?"

"—and he has paid one of these women to tell you some trumped-up tale of having seen your husband die. It isn't at all the sort of thing that I once dreamed Melville Barclay capable of doing. But, no doubt, he holds to the motto, 'All's fair in love and war.' However, let me tell you that, if any of those women did work this change in you, Ursula, she spoke a paid-for lie. And, if it was Reuben Creech, he also——"

"It wasn't Reuben Creech!" she dashed in. The next moment she stood with clutched hands, hating herself for the self-betrayal conveyed by this rash little interjection.

"I see. Then it *was* one of those women." He gave an ironic shrug. "There's no wizardry in my deductions. How otherwise could you possibly have become convinced? It isn't as if we had known each other since the middle of last week. Your de-

lusion wouldn't have died so quickly if its throat hadn't been cut. I am well aware of its tenacity, its longevity. At first, the whole affair looked as murky as that doleful weather in which I went up to London from Sussex and found desertion awaiting me everywhere—in more senses than one. But, since I have been here with my cousins at Combethorpe, my mental faculties have strengthened and cleared. I know that Melville Barclay is horribly culpable. But it is still early enough, Ursula, for you to weigh the full gravity of his deceit—to avoid its ugly consequences."

He had put a great fear into her heart, though her doubt of his charge was yet deep. Meanwhile, his divination of the real truth impressed her as little short of miraculous, though in reality it was only the sure logical efforts of subtle reasoning.

"I cannot believe that Melville would dupe me, as you imply," she said. "No; it is incredible!"

Then the lover in Dalgrish spoke, and with a chill blast of satiric reproach. "Other things are incredible, too—that his mighty attractiveness, for example, should so long have been resisted. You have certainly shown astonishing self-control. How happy you must have felt, when he threw that white light of testimony upon your widowhood! 'None but the brave deserve the fair'; and quite naturally. But there are ways of being brave. Falsehood, when we give to it imperial proportions, certainly requires courage in the creator."

Ursula passed him, as he paused, and went to the further edge of the small grove. She looked beyond it, with one hand on the trunk of a tree and with head bent forward as if in eager watch. Dalgrish understood. "You expect Melville," he said. "You don't want us to meet. But there isn't the slightest danger of a vulgar scrimmage, I assure you. Unless I am greatly in error, we both know better than that."

Still preserving her vigilant attitude, and with eyes that peered down

the tawny ribbon of sunlit road, she heard his voice grow nearer.

"But you accuse Melville of falsehood—of worse than—than that!" she responded.

"I accuse him of trying to steal you, Ursula, instead of winning you by fair means. Yes, that is my accusation, and my grievance as well."

She turned, and swiftly saw that he was very close at her side. And then he caught her in his arms, not roughly, but with force and tenderness combined. For a brief while he held her, and then on either of her cheeks he pressed an ardent kiss.

When, the next moment, he released her, Ursula stared at him with no shadow of anger in her beautiful eyes. The love of such a man, her suitor for so long past, touched her with a sudden awe. Besides, had she not dismissed him, sent him adrift, in cruel haste? This thought was burningly on her conscience, as she now said:

"Let me plead of you, in any case, not to meet Melville here!"

He was very pale. "You pardon me?"

"No—yes," she returned; and the way in which she said this, with her abundant beauty confronting him, struck through all his native self-control a keen, rapturous note. He felt that, if she had asked him to let her put a bullet through his heart, he would have consented willingly to die by a hand so adored.

"Only go now, please," she added.

"Will you answer one question if I go?" he said. "Do you love Melville?"

"He has made me grateful to him," she drew out, falteringly, after a slight pause.

"Grateful! But do you love him?"

She lifted both hands, wearily, agitatedly. "It often seems to me that I love nobody living except Aunt Anne."

He stooped, caught the leaf of a tall weed at his side, and slowly tore it into fragments. "How can you marry Melville, knowing he has lied to you?"

"I don't know; neither do you."

"But if I could prove——?"

"How could you prove?"

He was silent, brushing from his fingers with a handkerchief the moisture left by the juicy leaf he had just destroyed. "Suppose I could prove more," he let fall, a little later. "Suppose I could prove that your husband is still alive?"

"Still alive!"

She grew suddenly white, and reeled, catching the slim-stemmed bole of a young elm that grew in the shade nearby. But she waved him away as he approached, and righted herself with no apparent strain.

"Is he alive, Pemberton?" she asked, with a terrible earnestness. "Tell me, tell me!"

"Here is Barclay now," he replied. He had glimpsed him through the tree-trunks opposite, as he came swingingly across the grassy distance. "You know where I am. You may write me any time during the next four days. Repeat to Lord Melville, if you please, every word of what I have said——"

"No, no!" she exclaimed, leaning toward him, with parted lips and wide eyes that hungrily glistened. "I shall repeat nothing. Melville must go north, to Durham, to-morrow. His mother has been taken most seriously ill. Pray come to-morrow afternoon, say by five; will you not? I shall be on thorns till I meet you again."

"I shall try to come," he said, and passed quietly out from the shade into the sunshine. As he mounted his bicycle and rode away, the white, alarmed face of Lady Ursula glimmered toward him from the gloom of the grove, like the pure disk of some majestic flower.

"Melville has played a bold game," thought Dalgrish; "I'll play a bolder. And the end is not yet! 'Winners first, losers last,' says the proverb. We shall see what we shall see."

### XIII

"Good evening."

"Good evening."

Lord Melville was the first speaker,

Dalgrish the second. They stood face to face at the porch of the Raleigh Inn, not far from Trevor Court. It was after nine o'clock in the evening of that same day on which Dalgrish and Ursula had held their talk.

The two men stood looking at each other in the dimness, after their low-toned and colorless exchange of salutations. Each recoiled from the farce of a handshake. Lord Melville, in the rôle of host—if such a term be admissible—felt the necessity of breaking the silence.

"May I ask you to enter?" he said, with a wave of one hand toward the lighted hall beyond. "Allow me to lead the way."

They were presently seated together in a small room on the ground-floor, furnished with some smartness and containing a large central table of polished oak, on whose lustrous surface many journals lay carelessly scattered.

Lord Melville had placed himself on one side of the table; Dalgrish had sunk into a leathern arm-chair almost directly opposite.

"I must thank you," began Lord Melville, "for meeting me here as I requested you to do in my note of this afternoon."

Dalgrish gave a distant bow, and that was all.

"My reason for desiring your presence is plain and simple enough. Lady Ursula told me that she had met you this morning. She told me much, perhaps all that you said. It cast a reproach upon my honor as a gentleman."

"It decidedly did," returned Dalgrish.

Lord Melville, who had been somewhat pale, now flushed a little. "In ordinary circumstances I should feel inclined," he continued, "to ignore the charges you made. But, as matters stand between us, I can comprehend your wounded feelings, and can even sympathize with them."

Dalgrish took out his watch and glanced at its face, not insolently, but with a fatigued air.

"To the point, if you please," he said. "I accused you of having bribed one of the survivors of the *Carpentaria* to state that she had seen Jasper Garth perish."

"A serious accusation," returned Lord Melville, with a sort of pallid, flickering smile. "This is not the House of Commons, pray remember. There we may now and then have verged upon insulting each other, but here——"

"Oh, bosh!" brought out Dalgrish, with a faint flourish of one hand. "If you lured me here to try to punch my head, you're a very foolish person. I'm not certain that I'd even resist you. I'd simply feel like having the satisfaction of seeing you dragged into a police-court; and rest quite sure that I'd manage afterward to throw a rather searching light upon your motives of assault. Some people think there's too much law in England, and, generally speaking, they're right. But our monstrous network of legal protectiveness is, after all, a marvelous safeguard against bullying. Your talk about your 'honor as a gentleman' has a rather eighteenth-century sort of sound. You've just referred to my own 'wounded feelings.' I think 'disgust' would have been a terser and better definition. However, let that pass. I'm accustomed to the unraveling of skeins; so are you. I seem to have unraveled one now, and I said as much to Lady Ursula this morning. I didn't come here to lose my temper, or to see you lose yours. My accusation has, of course, been made. Disprove it, and I will humbly apologize. You can't afford to let me retain it, as you're very well aware. I'm not an ordinary individual, in the sense of public position; neither are you. We've fought fights before now, and I admit that you've worsted me more than once. Again, more than once I have worsted you. But this is probably our most serious contest. I claim that you must have held communication with one of the *Carpentaria* survivors. Am I wrong?"



Dalgrish had spoken with rapidity, but in a voice of the most ordinary tone. Every word that he had uttered cut like a lash, and he knew it. He was well aware, too, of certain differences between himself and the man with whom he dealt. Both were adroit politicians; both had exceptional intellects and wide worldly knowledge. But Melville Barclay's emotional nature was far less under control than his own. Yet he had not once quavered. And soon Dalgrish, who had expected vehement counterblows, was smitten by the most poignant surprise.

"You ask if you are wrong in claiming," said Lord Melville, "that I have held communication with one of the *Carpentaria* survivors. Well, you are not wrong."

No fibre in Dalgrish's lean, grave face betrayed a hint of triumph. "Which survivor, may I ask?"

"Miss Throop."

"I recall her. I've talked with every one of those women in the past—as I think you told me that you also had done—and of the whole group none struck me more unfavorably than the shallow, ill-informed damsel you've just named."

Having planted both elbows on the table before him and propped his drooped head with either close-clenched hand, Lord Melville stared down at some big illustration in one of the journals, perhaps without even vaguely catching its import. Then he gave a sudden backward movement, folded his arms, and spoke many sentences, fluent, unimpulsive, yet replete with apparent candor.

As far as it went, all that he uttered was absolute truth. He told of Miss Throop's advances and her subsequent statements. But he did not mention his own contemptuous treatment of the latter, nor did he touch upon those vigorous trainings which she underwent beneath his alert scrutiny. He discoursed of Lady Ursula's visit to her Goodge-street home, and of how impossible it had proved to shake her evidence in the least particular. But

he refrained from any allusion to his own keen anxiety, on this occasion, while she followed a line of verbal charlatanry which he himself had most carefully laid out.

When he had ended, Dalgrish got up from his chair. "Do you object," he asked, "to my visiting Miss Throop?"

Lord Melville, while slowly rising, smiled, lifted his brows, and then let his head drop on one side. "I was quite sure you would take that course! But unfortunately—" He hesitated.

With unmerciful sarcasm, Dalgrish caught him up. "I shall say of your course nothing so uncivil. How could I? Fate is to blame, not you. 'Unfortunately'! Oh, yes; quite so. Unfortunately, you would state, Miss Throop started yesterday for Kamchatka; or was it the South Pole? And you don't know her address in either locality."

Here Dalgrish walked to the door. He had snatched his hat from somewhere, and wore it as he crossed the threshold. Meanwhile, there broke from him a laugh of such acrid mockery that his listener was seized, just for one dizzying second, with a mad desire to spring after him and try another sort of battle than a verbal one.

But swiftly this frenzy vanished. A chill, inward shudder succeeded it. "I have blundered," flashed through Lord Melville's mind; "I should have known my man better." And he dropped back into the chair he had quitted, overmastered by mortification, dread and chagrin.

#### XIV

"My dear Ursula," said her aunt, the next morning, "here I am, able to walk about and enjoy myself with the first real resemblance to health that I've had in many a day, when lo! I find you looking ill and acting as if every inch of your body were in a nervous tingle. It's so disappointing! But, of course, I must feel consoled if Melville's departure for Durham, on so sad a mission, explains those *yeux*

*cernés* and that restless, unwonted manner."

There was the least vein of delicate satire in that last sentence. Ursula felt the color mount in her face.

"You mean, Aunt Anne," she said, "that my distress on Melville's account would surprise you? Oh, I read between your words clearly enough."

"Is it on Melville's account?" smiled Mrs. Aylesbury; and she at once gave her niece's cheek a caressing pat. "I'm immensely glad if it is!"

"You think I don't care for him."

"I have my anxieties, dear."

"But you forget," said Ursula, drawing herself up with a dignity that tried to mean remonstrance; "I've engaged myself to him!"

"So you have, Ursula; so you have!" An unconscious little sigh went with the words.

"You don't believe that I care for anybody except yourself!" cried Ursula, with a forlorn note that her auditor plainly detected behind her forced humor. "Don't be so sure of your complete sovereignty, please!"

"I should like very much not to be," said Mrs. Aylesbury, kissing her. "I'm quite willing to share my throne."

"That's ungracious!"

"No, darling; it's only wise. I'm getting to be an old woman, and, if I once saw you the loving wife of a man who loves you as much as Melville does, actual old age, when at last it came, would be shorn of half its ills."

Mrs. Aylesbury, for all her vaunted healthfulness, grew somewhat fatigued that afternoon; and her niece, knowing that a nap would be sought sooner or later, was not sorry that her time of seeking it should be a little before the hour of Dalgrish's expected arrival.

"I shall try to come," he had told Ursula; and for certain reasons, needless to name, she burned with longing that he would.

She was not fated to disappointment. At three o'clock he presented himself, and she received him in a room whose open windows looked forth upon great billows of foliage, grassy terraces, and an Italian effect

of urn or statue palely silhouetted against deep malachite backgrounds.

"You've a little paradise here, in Trevor Court," he said, drawing off his gloves. "I remember telling you so when I last came."

"Don't speak of paradises," she replied, with an impatient yet melancholy head-toss. "You have made life seem anything but paradise to me!"

He looked at her for a moment, and read in her face and air the signs that had so recently disturbed her aunt. They made her more beautiful to him than ever, and he was thrilled with a wish to offer prompt comfort. But all his plans were laid. He had spent a sleepless night at Combethorpe, thinking how he might not only delay her October wedding, but render it a fixed nullity besides.

"Oh, I see," he said, seeming to meditate. "You mean what I let fall yesterday——"

"About *him*!—about Jasper Garth!" Her look was fiercely inquisitive; her voice a high, entreating whisper.

"I merely said 'suppose,'" he murmured.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, giving a great sigh of relief; "then you did not really mean it!" But here she clouded with anger, and flashed on him a scornful look. "It was only a cruel bit of bravado, then! How contemptible!"

He leaned back in his chair for a second, closing his eyes, while disdain bent to a sardonic curve the line of his thin lips. "Oh, Ursula!" he cried, appealingly, sitting bolt upright and flinging both hands out before him, with untold disgust in the gesture. "You talk of cruelty, bravado and things contemptible! Pray, did Melville Barclay, before his trip into the north, tell you of how he wrote me a note yesterday, begging that I would join him at the Raleigh Inn? No? I thought not. But he got me there, though I knew his motive was one of fear alone."

"Fear?" she repeated.

"Why not? He had not foreseen that I would guess the secret of his in-

fluence over you. He learned from you yesterday what entire frankness I had used toward his conduct, while discussing it there in the grove. He thought, last evening, that he could carry things off with sublime impudence. I had consented to appear. There I stood, and in a little while he would sweep me off my feet. Did he deny that he had interviewed, very recently, one of the *Carpentaria* survivors? No; that was his hand-grenade; he exploded it under my nose, and then awaited the annihilating effect. But, somehow, that didn't occur. I continued to exist, and I told him, in plainest terms, that he was pedestaled on sham. The moment I proposed a visit to Miss Throop, he began with, 'Unfortunately.' I was quite prepared for the discouraging adverb. In this particular, he has covered his tracks. Miss Throop would have to be hunted for, let me assure you, by a posse of detectives, and then she might not be found."

Here Ursula obstinately shook her head. "I can't believe that she has been bribed, Pemberton. I saw her; I questioned her over and over again. She was never once even faintly confused. She stood without flinching the most difficult mental search."

"Yet she has now left England, rest certain, with Melville's guineas in her purse."

"I was coming to that when you broke in. She has friends, distant relations, in Australia, who were always good to her. She told me herself, when I last saw her, that they had deeply pitied her for having sustained, on the *Carpentaria*, a loss of twelve hundred pounds—partly her savings and partly an inheritance from her dead mother—and that they had sent her an invitation to come and live with them, which she had decided to accept."

Dalgrish's face, in all his turbid Parliamentary harangues, had never expressed a more caustic acerbity.

"And you probably gave her a handsome cheque? Eh, Ursula?"

"I wished to offer some reward. I mentioned a hundred pounds; but Melville——"

"Stringently interposed. I was sure you would say it."

Ursula bit one of the lower corners of her lips. "Oh, that is the way with a man of your mind and your methods! You are always sure of what one is going to say before one says it!"

"Not always. But the alphabet of deduction isn't precisely like a problem in higher mathematics. Miss Throop learned a lesson, and I concede the full capacity of her tutor."

"But you are making Melville out to be a scamp!"

"What is self-evident requires no demonstration."

"You've never before breathed a word against his integrity."

"It takes a great deal of life, now and then, to test character." An added hardness possessed his features. "Think, Ursula. He sought this woman out. He was constrained to accede that much. He did not dare to state any such absurdity as that she went to *him* with her new dramatic tale instead of to *you*. That first step not merely lays him open to suspicion: it incriminates him."

She seemed to weigh these words in pained silence. Then, with sharp challenge: "No, no! I can't accept your wholesale charge! It's prejudice—it isn't proof!"

She saw one of his hands tighten into a knot.

"Give me time! Only give me time, Ursula, and I'll make it proof! You spoke of marrying him early in October. It is not yet mid-August. Australia is far away. Still, I can use strong efforts to have this woman found. There is even a most decided chance that she has not left England at all. Promise me that you will delay the wedding until I either fail or succeed."

"I will not promise!"

Dalgrish watched her for a slight while in this rebellious humor. Then he slipped from his chair and went



toward the open window that gave upon the enchanting garden. With his back turned to her, he remained motionless for many seconds.

"Well," he said, slowly, veering around and facing her, "I have discovered just what I wished to discover."

She laughed, mockingly. "What a Machiavelli you are! Do you mean to tell me now, that you had some subtle and deep-hidden motive for seeking to postpone the wedding?"

"You may call it that, if you please. I wished surely to find out—and I have done so!—the full force of your attachment for Melville Barclay. You can scarcely blame me in the matter of this attempt. I had the right to push inquiry, to observe how far some spur of fancied gratitude was goading you, Ursula, and how far the stimulus of the real love. This, I say, was my right; none has a better. If you have cared, all this time, more for Melville than for me, you have concealed the preference with a skill only explainable by coquetry. And I see that you have cared. Ursula, it was cruel of you!" His voice now became glacial, and his brows fiercely darkened. "Well, you deserve your punishment, though I shall not be glad to deal it."

"Punishment?" she asked; "what punishment?" Something in his tones had touched her with a fresh pang of terror.

He put his hands behind his back and walked placidly up to her side. She shrank a little, not because she was afraid of him, but because she had a creeping horror of what he might say. And soon this horror deepened.

"Your husband is alive. I will show him to you visibly, in the flesh. I will show him to you the day after to-morrow."

## XV

AFTER she had held a half-hour more of conversation with Dalgrish, and when he had taken his departure from Trevor Court, it might truly be said of Lady Ursula that she gained

her own apartments in a state bordering on collapse. By degrees, however, came the calmness for which she hoped and struggled. At last she could think—reflect.

But the lull of storm in her spirit brought a longing for friendly intercourse. To whom could she go? Not to her Aunt Anne, whose revived health it would be cruelty to imperil with such eerie tidings. There was Heath Hammond, of course; there was always nice, companionable, sapient Heath Hammond. She would take an early train for town to-morrow, and throw herself on the stolid rock of his superior judgment and discretion.

But here a new consideration deterred her. Were not her lips sealed? Had she not promised Dalgrish to keep silent until he released her from such pledge? She was to see her husband, but only on condition that she would say nothing until a certain mystery regarding his survival from the wreck and his present secluded existence in England should be cleared away. Oh, these promises that both her lovers were so eager to exact! In the case of Lord Melville, her bondage was now shattered. If Jasper Garth indeed lived, the story told by Miss Throop must, of course, have been apocryphal. On this subject she could at least speak freely. For why had Melville desired her secrecy except with an aim to thwart the possible investigations of Dalgrish? Fool that she had been, not sooner to have suspected his honesty! This keeping of Miss Throop in the background, this mantling of her disclosures with obscurity, this aversion to having even Mrs. Aylesbury know the substance of her revelations—did it not all point to the subtlety and craft of the determined deceiver?

She was thinking bitter things of her accepted suitor, when Mrs. Hatchett, the housekeeper, came to her with a certain annoying scrap of information.

"Eliza Todd wishes to see me, Hatchett?" she said, coldly. "I can't imagine why. What on earth could have brought her to Trevor Court?"

"That's what I says to her, my lady," returned Hatchett, in prim tones that harmonized with her spare form, severely neat attire and demeanor of rigid respectability. "But she talked a lot of rather hagitated stuff about wantin' to warn you against somebody, and 'ow it would be for your own good if you was only to 'ear 'er for a few minutes."

"Warn me against somebody?" murmured Ursula. "Was she—quite sober, Hatchett?"

"Oh, yes, my lady. I wouldn't 'a' presumed to 'old any talk with 'er if she 'adn't been. She's dressed quite nice, too, and looks better as to 'ealth, my lady, than when she was in your service."

"I'll see her," said Lady Ursula, after a pause. "You may bring her to me here, Hatchett."

Eliza Todd presently entered a doorway through which she had often passed before, and with the same easy, confidential step of former times. The willowy figure had lost none of its old grace; the fragile, almost patrician visage, with the sultry black eyes inherited from a French mother, had never worn an expression of more interesting reserve. The slim hands were gloved with true Gallic neatness, and the costume, thoroughly in fashion, was yet marked by a modest absence of the least glaring detail. She looked exactly what she had once been, the British maid-servant in a household of rank and fashion. Her entire personality addressed her watcher in terms of somber retrospection. For Ursula had once greatly liked Eliza Todd. She had borne with the woman until further tolerance verged upon humiliation. But, at last, a discharge had become imperative, while even then it had brought regret.

"Good afternoon, my lady," Eliza now said, dropping a decorous little curtsy, after just the right respectful advance.

"Good afternoon, Eliza." An impulse of memorial kindness tempted her to add, "Be seated." But the past thrust in its veto just as the past had at first prompted leniency.

Ursula, leaning back in her arm-chair, surveyed the intruder quite unsparingly, as she continued:

"I hear from Hatchett that you were anxious to see me."

"Very, my lady."

"That you wished—are these the right words?—to warn me against somebody."

"They are the right words, my lady."

A slight silence followed. "Well, Eliza? And who is the 'somebody'?"

"Ellen Throop, my lady."

Ursula started. She felt herself flush. "You mean the Miss Throop who was saved from the *Carpentaria*?"

"I mean that same person," replied Eliza Todd, in the old familiar tones.

"What have you to say regarding Miss Throop? Do you mean that you wish to warn me against her?"

"Yes, my lady; I do mean that."

"You know her, then?"

"I've known her for a twelve-month. I haven't had much luck since you sent me away, but I came to tell you, my lady, that this Ellen Throop is a shameful fraud. A year ago, when I was very poor, I lodged in Goodge street, in the same house with Ellen Throop. We often gossiped together, and I suppose I told her, with not the least harmful intention, of the years I'd spent as your maid. She often spoke of the *Carpentaria* wreck, but she never once mentioned anything about having seen your husband go down on the sinking ship, or having seen him fall into the water, or having seen him at all after she had got into the small boat. But, more than once, she referred to the story of Reuben Creech, the sailor, who said that he had seen Mr. Garth standing on deck, trying to cheer up a frightened group of passengers, and saying to them——"

"Yes, yes, I know," Ursula struck in, with an uplifted, forbidding hand. That old refrain, "I feel in my heart that I shall be saved!" rang once

more through her spirit. But now the intensity of its reminder was accentuated by what Dalgrish had so lately said. Hence she was pale as death when her next words broke upon Eliza Todd.

"You mean, then, Eliza, that Miss Throop never knew anything at all concerning either Mr. Garth's death or escape?"

Incredulous laughter shot from Eliza, and was then swiftly checked. "Oh, my lady! She knew nothing—nothing whatever. It's rage against that deceitful, lying creature, that has brought me here now."

Ursula rose. She gave Eliza both hands. Then she said:

"Now, tell me why you think Ellen Throop a shameful fraud."

"It's this way, my lady," came the earnest reply; "a few days ago I went to see that woman, in Goodge street. Everything about her was changed; she wore fresh clothes; her worried look had gone; there was new carpet in each of her two rooms, and some of their poor furniture had been replaced by better. I stared round me in surprise; I stared at *her* in surprise. Very soon she burst out laughing, and said something boastful about her altered fortunes. But I'd no suspicion of the truth, my lady, until she mentioned my own name. I, as she now let slip, had been much concerned with the improvement in her lot. This confused me at first, and I taxed her with questions. But it was only after she'd got frightened that I forced her to make a full confession. She'd used the knowledge I'd given her of your—your affairs, my lady." And now Eliza's head drooped very low. "Oh, it stabs me with shame to speak it, but I must, I must!"

"You need not, Eliza."

The woman flung back her head, showing how forlorn her face had become. "Need not, my lady?"

"No. Did Ellen Throop admit that Lord Melville had—paid her money?" The words seemed to scorch her lips.

"Yes, my lady; a great deal of

money. And he had schooled and trained her for days, before he would allow her to tell you a certain story—a story altogether false."

Ursula made two or three slow, nodding motions of the head. "I understand, Eliza."

"Oh, my lady! I'm so sorry if—it—cuts deep! But I couldn't keep anything back!"

"Right, Eliza; thoroughly right. It is far best. And now, answer me, please: has Miss Throop gone to Australia?"

"To Australia? No, my lady, not at all. She no longer lives in Goodge street, but she's here in London. Her address——"

"Never mind her address, Eliza. I really do not care to hear it. It's of no importance to me; I shall never make use of it hereafter."

Eliza had gone. A few minutes after she had glided down-stairs, Ursula lingeringly followed. She knocked at Mrs. Aylesbury's closed door.

"May I come in, Aunt Anne?"

She presently found Mrs. Aylesbury standing before her mirror, with a face that wore a guilty flush.

"Really, Ursula, it's quite shameful of me to have slept so long! I meant only to have taken a half-hour's nap. I— But, my dear, what has happened?"

"Do I look so ill, Aunt Anne?"

"You look terrified; there's no other word for it," said Mrs. Aylesbury.

"I am!" cried her niece, bursting into tears.

"Oh, my poor child! What—what have you been seeing?"

"The world, Aunt Anne; the world, and the vileness and meanness of it!" Here Ursula threw herself, sobbing wildly, upon her aunt's breast.

Inside that same hour, she had wired to Heath Hammond at his chambers in town. "I shall visit you at your office to-morrow morning," ran her telegram. "I desire your counsel on a certain most important matter."

## XVI

THIS was one of Heath Hammond's busy days, but Ursula, quickly shown into his presence at about eleven in the morning, had no suspicion that she might have angered, if seen, a roomful of waiting clients.

"I'm so glad not to find you desperately occupied," she said, seating herself near his desk. "I don't know what I should have done, if you'd been full of business, for I've lots to tell you—really, lots."

Almost any other man thus situated would have uttered a despairing sigh. But Hammond, after his quiet eyes had surveyed her face—though somehow without seeming to do so—gently said:

"You appear excited. Is it anything calamitous?"

"Calamitous! You've found just the right word. But you always calm me—I don't know why. You've calmed me already. How long ago is it since you congratulated me on my engagement to Melville? Well, never mind. Now you can take back your congratulations, if you please."

"Take them back?"

"Yes. He has behaved villainously!" She hid her face with both hands, then dashed them away. At once, after this little surrender, she began to speak on, with volubility and firmness. Her sentences were so rapid, so pregnant with terse exposition, that Hammond had soon mastered the whole gist of their accusations.

"This is all bad," he said, when she had paused, her cheeks two roses, her eyes two flashing stars. "It is all very bad. And you tell me that Lord Melville has gone away to Durham?"

"Yes; but I shall never speak to him again. The truth is, I never loved him. So my disgust comes easier, don't you see?"

"I see," said Hammond, with his wonted gravity. "Pardon me, Lady Ursula; but it was then—the other suitor?"

"Whom I loved? Pemberton Dal-

grish? Oh, I've never loved either of them! Don't look at me, Heath Hammond, as though you thought me the weakest and most contemptible woman in the world!"

"I am not looking at you with any such conviction," he answered.

"But you feel it! I'm sure you feel it! I feel it now! Still, recollect, please, they were both men of intellect—resourceful, attractive, subtle, versed in every diplomatic art."

"I freely grant it."

She gave an impatient, "Pshaw!" at this. "Oh, you won't blame me, then! But I ought to be blamed. I have had no real excuse for letting the long duel between them go on and on. As for Dalgrish— Well, I saw him yesterday. We had a terrible talk. He came to Trevor Court; he's staying near with his cousins. But I can't tell you what passed between us. He's made me promise complete silence. And yet Melville did the same, and only did it to conceal his treachery. I can't help feeling now that they've both been traitors—to me! Upon my word, I have half a mind to break my word—in this case of Dalgrish, I mean. What he said—what he agreed to do—was so terrifying!"

Over Hammond's genial, homely, inscrutable face a slight, an exceedingly slight change passed. "Terrifying?" he repeated, and reached out his long, muscular arm toward the desk. For a moment, his hand moved a small paper-weight up, down, crosswise, as if it were some piece on a chess-board, which he hesitated just how to place. Then:

"You could only be terrified, Lady Ursula, by one thing."

"You mean—?" she feebly hazarded.

"News concerning your late husband."

She gave a great start. "Suppose it were that! I don't say it is, but suppose it were!"

The steady eyes of the lawyer met her own. "I'm reminded of something," he said, more slowly than

usual. "My reference to your husband has brought it all back to me. You sanctioned, if you remember, my opening of that mysterious envelope."

"Yes," she assented.

"Well, it did not contain what you supposed." Here Hammond rose. "I must request that you will make yourself acquainted with its real contents."

He at once passed to an opposite part of the room, drew out a bunch of keys, and unlocked the door of a large, high cabinet. Thence, with little delay, he extracted an envelope, and took from it a closely written foolscap paper.

This he handed to her. "The entire document," he proceeded, "is rather prolix. Your late husband was an over-fluent writer; he had not, somehow, the gift of condensation. You will perceive, however, Lady Ursula, that I have marked certain important passages. If you run your eye over each of these in succession you will soon secure a full perception of the whole rather strange memorandum."

Ursula, with the stiff paper crackling in her nervous fingers, obeyed this behest. She had read three or four minutes when a smothered scream left her. The paper dropped into her lap, then fell to the floor. Hammond picked it up. Meanwhile, his visitor was bewilderedly pressing a hand against either temple.

"I never dreamed of this! How strange! how strange!"

"Your husband seems to have been ashamed," said Hammond, "that you should know, during his own lifetime, of this twin-brother's existence. It is evident that he would have spared no effort to keep from you any such knowledge. Nor is this, Lady Ursula, at all remarkable. The dissimilarity in their characters and careers must have been as striking as the resemblance between their persons. Your husband makes it plain that this brother, Ambrose, was from boyhood a most depraved and vicious being. Clearly, as years went by, Jasper employed every effort to save him. At home he was a

constant sorrow to his parents; at school he aroused in his teachers both grief and scorn. When you have read the whole paper from end to end, you will perceive that, as Jasper grew older, his attention was painfully turned toward a certain family taint. For several generations, just such irreclaimable derelicts as this twin-brother had appeared under the Garth name. He began to think, therefore, that the doom of Ambrose was sealed, while he yet strove, with the bad logic of his fraternal fondness, either to nullify or avert it."

"And he failed—constantly failed?"

"From the lad's boyhood straight on, until they were men. All that part of the history is keenly pathetic. Reading it hereafter, you will realize how Jasper Garth must have suffered. His parents had both died before he was twenty. Ambrose's education in one of the Melbourne free schools had been fraught with misery for his brother. Twice he was threatened with expulsion; twice he had to appear in court and suffer fines for serious misdemeanors. At last, the school did expel him, and at the age of eighteen he behaved so shamelessly in a drunken street brawl that he was imprisoned for six months. But still your husband did not despair of him. On his release from prison, Jasper listened to his profuse avowals of repentance, and literally begged from friends the money and influence to place him in a capacity only a little better than that of common laborer on a distant farm. Here he remained for a space of two years, now and then writing his brother accounts of his mode of life, which, in reality, were tissues of falsehood. At length, he returned in rags, and bore near his right temple a deep, red, permanent scar, which his hair concealed, but which was the result of a blow in some tipsy fight, which for days had left him senseless and close upon death. The rest of this chronicle, Lady Ursula, is one prolonged series of persecutions, now stealthy and now overt, broken by a single interval of five years, during which Ambrose



served his time in an Australian prison for the commission of forgery. He was released, only to continue his tormenting conduct toward Jasper, who had now begun the amassing of that great fortune which he bequeathed to you. There is no doubt that your husband's patience and self-control were supreme. But mortification was added to his sense of acute grievance. Ambrose possessed a physical vigor, a soundness of constitution far exceeding his own, and doubtless for this reason his reckless bouts of dissipation produced no material change either in his health or his looks. Meanwhile, his great resemblance to Jasper underwent no abatement. He would sometimes use this resemblance with daring insolence. Repeatedly, had your husband so chosen, he might have re-committed him to prison for obtaining large sums of money in Melbourne and elsewhere, on the strength of this same extraordinary likeness. Finally, your husband's powers of endurance reached their limit. But, even then, he was merciful to the insufferable culprit. He gave him a handsome sum of money, insisted that he should settle for the rest of his life in New Zealand, and that, if he was ever known to leave the island, prosecutions for past offenses would be commenced, that must inevitably lead to a ten-years' imprisonment, if not longer. Cowed at last, Ambrose took sail. From that hour until the wreck of the *Carpentaria*, Jasper never saw him again, though by private arrangement he kept continuously learning that his ultimate measure had proved successful. But you will see that he was always haunted by a double dread. He feared that some one might tell you of his close relationship to such a scoundrel, and he also feared that the diabolic boldness of the scoundrel himself might cause him to appear in England—in London, even, at the very doorstep of his dwelling."

Heath Hammond had spoken in his usual matter-of-fact voice. As he ended, Ursula half strangled in her throat a convulsive sob.

"What a light this all seems to shed upon Dalgrish's action!"

"Dalgrish's?"

"Yes—yes!"

"Do you not mean——?"

"Melville's? No, no; I mean just what I say—Dalgrish's! Oh, I can tell you of *his* behavior, now! Perhaps I may be wronging him—but that is for you to judge. There, let me collect my thoughts." She put her hand to her forehead, as though some dizzying tumult were at work there. "Dalgrish came yesterday, before Eliza Todd's astounding visit. He denounced Melville's deceit; he wished to delay my marriage—my marriage! how hateful the thought seems now!—until he had obtained proof that Miss Throop had been bribed to lie. Then he repeated something that he had said, or hinted, the last time we met. It was about—Jasper."

"But you hesitate," said Hammond, with a curious look forming and growing in his steadfast hazel eyes. "Could it have been—?" And, in turn, he himself hesitated. Perhaps, unconsciously, she let the light clasp of her fingers touch his arm. "I think you have guessed. He is to show me Jasper—visible in the flesh! He is to show him to me tomorrow evening, there, near the grounds of Trevor Court."

They exchanged a long look, deeply significant on either side.

"It will not be he," said the lawyer.

"You believe not?"

"I am certain."

"Then—" she began, and stopped short.

"It will be the other, I think," said Heath Hammond, drily.

## XVII

WHEN Ursula returned to Trevor Court that afternoon, she went straight into the presence of her aunt.

"Don't tell me that I look fagged out," she said, a little plaintively.

"I won't," returned Mrs. Aylesbury, who had already begun to think ineffable things of her niece's jaded appearance. She laid on a side-table the book that she had been reading. "Ursula?"

"Well."

"Give me your hand. It's feverish, dear. Won't you come and sit beside me, and let me know what went on between Heath Hammond and yourself?"

Her niece silently drew a chair close to Mrs. Aylesbury's side. Then she leaned her head on the other's shoulder, and her aunt slowly stroked, for some time, the wavy and silky folds of her beautiful hair. "Don't try to say it all out at once, love. Let me hear it gradually, by degrees."

Ursula obeyed. "How wonderful, how totally unforeseen!" her aunt, at length, said. "By the way, here is a telegram from Melville." She reached for a paper, and read its contents. His mother's attack had not been serious. Melville was coming up from Durham by an early train that same day. He might reach Trevor Court before evening.

"I will not see him!" asseverated Ursula. "I will never speak to him or notice him again."

"You need not."

"How shall we manage, Aunt Anne? Had I not better write a few words on a card, and let it be given him when he presents himself?"

"No, not that. I will see him. Trust me."

"Not that!" cried Ursula. "You—an invalid! Never!"

"Tut-tut, my dissenter! I'm not an invalid any longer. I haven't been better in several years. The Duchess of Down, by the way, is coming here for a day or two. She may arrive, she writes, in time for dinner."

"In time for dinner! That's so like her," laughed Ursula, forlornly.

"She is determined to see me, before she goes to Vichy. And I shall feel so proud to have her find me well; it will touch her queer old soul, I'm certain. And now, Ursula, I am very deter-

mined—very!—that you shall not meet Melville when he comes. But he shall find me down-stairs, in the morning-room; something assures me that he will make haste to reach Trevor Court as soon as possible. I shall have that letter which Eliza Todd gave you just before she left, and which she forced Miss Throop to give *her*—the one letter which he was foolish enough to write his bribed adherent. I shall be very composed; you know, dear, that explosiveness isn't at all in my line. But I am with you heart and soul, and I mean to make him remember our interview to his dying day!"

It may have been an hour later when Lord Melville Barclay was shown into the same room where he had parted from Ursula such a brief period ago. Perhaps, for an instant, he had expected that the seated figure, some distance away, might belong to Ursula. But, seeing his mistake, he came blithely forward, in his characteristic way.

"I'm so pleased to find that you are still well," said the newcomer, drawing nearer to where Mrs. Aylesbury sat. He put out his hand, but she had dropped her eyes upon her embroidery, and answered him while stitching slowly, as if the pattern required urgent heed:

"Thanks."

A slight silence. "Ursula got my wire, I suppose?"

"Yes."

Lord Melville threw himself into an easy-chair. "Then I shall see her soon?"

Mrs. Aylesbury let her embroidery slip sideways to the floor. She looked full at the man opposite. "You may see her again, Melville, but it will not be in this house, and, if you do see her, she will never speak to you as long as she lives."

She watched him whiten. Mixed with its pallor, a sort of horror seemed to gather in his face.

"I was very glad to learn, Melville, that your mother's illness had proved only transient. She has been one of my dearest friends, and I pray she

may never know how you have shamed yourself with Ursula, and why your engagement to my niece is irrevocably broken."

He leaned forward in his chair, with hands locked in front of him. "What's this?" he shot out, huskily. "I deny——"

"No, no, Melville; it will not do. The evidence against you is too strong." Then, for some time, with lowered eyes, Mrs. Aylesbury spoke on.

"Eliza Todd!" he presently cried. "An intemperate, thieving jade! Reformed, indeed! *Her* evidence! If Ellen Throop had not gone to Australia——"

"Melville! Ellen Throop did *not* go to Australia! She is here in England."

He clenched both hands. "If she has betrayed me, lied to me, is that my fault?"

Mrs. Aylesbury smiled, but with infinite sadness. From a high wicker basket, she took an envelope, opened it, and drew forth a sheet of note-paper.

"The writing, here, Melville, is unmistakably yours." And then she slowly read these words:

"DEAR MISS THROOP:

"I am called out of town for two days, and cannot again see you in Goodge street until Thursday next, at the usual hour. Then my drilling process will be resumed, and I warn you that I shall be a task-master sterner than formerly. You are doing fairly well, thus far, but you must permit me to tell you that in certain ways you have disappointed me. I wish you to stand cross-examination better. You are glib and cautious already, but you are still not half glib and cautious enough. A certain person will be—as I have often assured you—very exacting and excessively suspicious. I wish you so to put yourself in the position of one who actually saw the drowning in every harrowing detail, so that you will almost believe yourself, when the important moment of disclosure comes, to have experienced all that you narrate. I wish you to identify yourself, like a skilled, emotional actress, with the entire fiction. The enclosed cheque—pardon my humorous vein—may stimulate you in this course of adroit falsification. Keep picturing to yourself the *Carpentaria* as distinctly seen after you had been placed in the life-boat, and not as immediately having been swallowed up by fog, according to your former story of long ago. Try to learn by heart the exact words which, at my dictation, you wrote

down during our second interview. Thus far you have stumbled in them, and I anticipate, next Thursday——"

"The treacherous devil!" leaped, as if mechanically, from Lord Melville's blanched lips. "She swore to me, when I asked her for it, that she had destroyed this letter!"

He rose, piteously confused, almost gasping for breath.

"Well, Melville," said Mrs. Aylesbury, with not a shred of scorn or triumph in her level voice, "you have heard enough?" She tossed the letter toward him. "There is your fatal blunder, though Ursula did not need it in the way of conviction. Yes, you are right. Seize it; crush it; destroy it. No one has any wish to use it against you. Neither Ursula nor I will ever speak. It is simply that you and she are strangers forever. You have a great career awaiting you. But, howsoever much you suffer, do not stain honor in the endeavor to suffer less!"

"Honor!" he cried, with dismal violence in his voice. "A great passion fights for its life, and to do so it must catch the first weapon that will serve." He laughed with intense mockery and walked toward the door by which he had entered. He stood there, with his hand grasping the knob.

"Tell me, may she not hereafter—pardon my fault, folly, sin—crime, if you care to call it so?"

"She will never pardon you, Melville—never."

"Are you certain of this?"

"I am certain."

Mrs. Aylesbury might have added: "I am certain, because I know your love has never been returned." But she added nothing, and Lord Melville, opening the door and passing its threshold, called back, with the most melancholy voice that had ever escaped him or would ever escape him in the years to be:

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Melville!"

And he went away. He had looked for the last time on all the lavish graces and greeneries of Trevor Court.

## XVIII

AMONG the trees of that small grove where she had so lately met Pemberton Dalgrish at a similar hour, Ursula stole the day after Melville's dismissal from Trevor Court, with hesitating steps. Her dress was dark, though her face gleamed pale as a star above its dimness. She had gone but a few paces into shade from the outer meadow, when Dalgrish came noiselessly to her side.

In the vague light, he perceived her pallor.

"So you kept your promise?" he said.

"Are you surprised?" she answered.

"No; but you seem alarmed."

"Is that strange? Are you prepared to keep *your* promise?"

Something in her tone, her phrasing, made him slightly start. He peered into her face for a second, read there only what seemed to him a natural agitation, and said, almost under his breath:

"Oh, yes."

"You've been up to town, then, since I last saw you?"

"Of course."

"And you brought *him*?"

"I did not bring him; but he came at my wish."

"He's here, then, waiting?"

"He is here, waiting."

"For what?" she quickly asked. "Just to see me and then to go away without a word? You told me that there was some mystery in the matter—that he couldn't, or wouldn't, address a word to me; that, perhaps, it might be arranged so that he would not even know I was looking at him."

"It has been arranged that way," said Dalgrish.

He did not see the irrepressible sneer that crept momentarily between her lips. "And afterward?" she pursued. "When I have realized that it is he, alive, saved from the shipwreck, shall I not know more?"

"Not to-night."

"You say that as if you were un-

certain of my ever solving this mystery."

Dalgrish looked hard at her once more, in the dubious light. He was wholly unprepared for her present attitude. He had expected flurry and trepidation. These direct and relatively composed questions both disturbed and disarmed him.

"Let the to-morrows take care of themselves," he said. "Of course, he has some reason for keeping secluded, unknown, unrecognized."

"And he will not be aware of my presence when I am observing him?"

"N—no."

"Where is he?"

"At the further end of the grove, over yonder." Dalgrish pointed in a certain direction. "Will you come with me?"

"What is he doing now?" again inquired Ursula; "simply waiting for you to come back and join him?"

"That is all."

She was moving along on the soft turf, at Dalgrish's side. "But suppose I should go forward and speak to him?"

"You agreed that you would not—unless I gave consent."

"Did I agree?"

"You promised."

"Did I promise? Oh, well."

"Please keep silence now," he enjoined, in the softest whisper. He touched her arm. The grove, just at this point of their miniature journey, was so dark that he did not discern how she shrank from the brief contact.

"If you go on for a yard or two," he at length continued, "and look through that opening in the boughs, you will see him quite clearly."

Ursula obeyed. In the open meadow, only a few feet away, she perceived a face and figure that made her heart stand still. The features, the poise of limbs and frame, the general effect of dress—all was so vital and stinging in its portraiture that she afterward felt sure she would have swooned, then and there, if a certain premonition had not steadied her.

Still, even as it was, she had to struggle against a dizzying qualm.

This passed, however, in a trice. She remembered what course she had come here with the fixed resolve to take, and pushed on, past the dusk of the grove, out into brighter air, straight toward the man, who seemed either his own ghost or his own sentient incarnation.

"Are you Jasper Garth?" she said. "Are you my husband?"

The man stumbled backward, in plain consternation. Then, as if defiantly pulling himself together, "Yes, I am," he said. "Don't you see that I am?"

"Ah!" broke from Ursula. That answer had been enough. The voice was not her dead husband's.

But she gave no other reply. Indeed, there was not time. For Heath Hammond, who had somehow never seemed to her as large and powerful as now, rapidly crossed her path. He, also, went straight up to the man she had just addressed. But he did more than Ursula had done. He held out his hand.

"Can this really be you, Jasper Garth!" he exclaimed. "Then the sea has indeed given up its dead!"

Between Heath Hammond and Ursula everything had been predetermined. She drew nearer as the latter spoke. Then, in an instant, she saw Hammond sweep with one arm the hat from Ambrose Garth's head and toss back the hair from his right temple. There, like a welt wrought by some heavy whip, shone the red scar.

Hammond's next words came clear and firm. "There, Lady Ursula, you see that he is not Jasper Garth, but Ambrose Garth, your late husband's twin-brother."

The man, thus coolly exposed, stooped and caught up his hat, with a snarl and a glare. He lifted his clenched fist, too, but neither at Hammond nor Ursula. A torrent of oaths poured from him, blended with reproaches at being thus duped and trapped.

It was Dalgrish at whom he hurled his wrath; and Dalgrish, having now

come forth past the edge of the wood, watched him in utter silence, gnawing colorless lips. Before long, Garth moved out on the road, with a sidling, wary step, and an eye that roved distrustfully from Hammond to Dalgrish. Then, seeing that neither sought to detain him, he quickened his pace; and a big clump of elders, growing just where the road curved as with the curve of the wide valley itself, soon hid him from sight.

Ursula slipped to the side of Heath Hammond, who at once offered her his arm. She took it, and they went together toward the neighboring lawns of Trevor Court, without a word to Dalgrish, who in turn made them no sign.

And Dalgrish, for longer than he knew, stood there among the thickening glooms, rigid, immovable. The flashes died from the river, the stars came out in the hazy heavens, faint and far, like white roses. But still he remained, stirless and mute.

His revenge, his passionate eagerness to prevent her marriage—to what mockery of dust and ashes had it all miserably turned!

## XIX

"HE will come this evening," said Mrs. Aylesbury; "I am sure of it. He cannot stay away."

"No, Aunt Anne," said Ursula; "he will not dare to come."

"Oh, it isn't a question of daring, in such cases," declared the Duchess of Down. "It's a question of not being able to stay away. And, if he does come, you, Ursula, must not see him, since you've been through quite enough for one day. You certainly should avoid all further excitement, my dear, and either read something nice and soporific, or talk for a while with your amiable lawyer, Heath Hammond."

"Thank you, duchess," observed Hammond, coolly, just then appearing in an open doorway.

"Did you hear? How dreadful!" sighed the duchess. "Still, I called



you amiable, didn't I? and you ought to take that as a great compliment from me." Here she turned to Mrs. Aylesbury. "As for you, Anne, under no consideration will I sanction *your* reception of Dalgrish, either. Melville Barclay has proved sufficiently trying, as it is. No; if my gentleman comes, *I* will greet him!"

And the duchess did. He had presented himself at Trevor Court in a desperate state of mind. Entering the same room in which Mrs. Aylesbury had talked with his rival on the previous day, he stood for a moment amid all its outlay of costly yet discreet embellishment. He decided that it was vacant, after his gaze had swept all its shadowy nooks and had grown accustomed to the delicate lights and tints of its wide interior. "Would she come?" he asked himself. "Might she not refuse to meet him?"

And then, while he thus reflected, a small, stout shape emerged from a corner, in which a reading-lamp was almost hidden by a Louis Quatorze screen.

"Oh, I beg pardon," he said, recognizing the duchess.

"You might beg a thousand, my dear Mr. Dalgrish," darted her grace, "and yet not be forgiven."

He stared, then drew himself together, stroking his chin, quite serenely, with one hand.

"Your society is at all times agreeable, duchess," he coldly brought out; "but permit me to remind you that you are not hostess here."

"Bosh, Pemberton! None of your trashy airs with me, please. I'm all the hostess you will have. Nobody else will see you. Neither Mrs. Aylesbury nor Ursula will ever notice you again. I could spread your disgrace through England in a single day, if I chose, and you're very well aware of it."

"I'm aware of nothing of the sort," he flashed back, though with perfect repose. "Any malicious charge you make I can answer."

"How?"

"Why, by simply saying that I was fooled by an impostor."

"Oh! you dare to state that!"

"I do. What would my answer be to your tattle?" he continued, lifting one hand and sending out a sharp click with thumb and forefinger; "that I was fooled and betrayed by the twin-brother of Jasper Garth, who told me a lying tale about the necessity of having his wife look upon him in order that she might not become a bigamist, while at the same time circumstances rendered it imperative that for the present he should hold with her no communication whatever." He walked toward the door.

Her grace turned as he calmly left the room, and flung herself on a lounge, burying her head in its pillows. He had gone, but somehow she felt he had not been entirely routed.

"He is impossible," the duchess said to Mrs. Aylesbury, as they sat alone together an hour afterward. "He is impossible, just as his uncle, the Earl of Clavering, was impossible."

Mrs. Aylesbury sat patting one of her little hands.

"Oh, I suppose I deserved it," the duchess went on. "He stalked out of the room like an indignant prince. Heavens, what a lover he would make! Now that I think of it, I begin——"

"Not to forgive him! I won't have that."

"Oh, no; but both these men—and Dalgrish, as a human potency, towers above your bland Melville—have had a very hard row to hoe, my dear, very hard, indeed. Both madly adored Ursula. Both, in the general worldly sense, were honorable men. Both have had a sharp temptation to deal with, and both have succumbed. And both, remember, come of a stock that in past ages would quickly have settled their differences with pistols or swords. One can't help thinking, too, of the old adage, 'All's fair in love and war.'"

Mrs. Aylesbury raised a chiding finger. "No, all is not fair in either love or war! War will one day pass from the earth, I believe, simply because people will recognize that there is nothing fair in it. And, as for love,

which will never pass from the earth, it ceases to be worthy of its name the instant treachery and meanness invade it and disgrace it."

The duchess swept a tear from her eye. "What's become of Ursula?" she asked.

"When I last saw her, she was seated in the billiard-room, watching Heath Hammond knock the balls about and talking to him, somewhat yawningly. Poor, faithful Hammond! I hope all this theatrical topsyturvydom hasn't bored his sedate soul to death. Ah, here they come!"

Ursula and Hammond entered the room as she spoke.

"How long you stayed in the billiard-room!" said Mrs. Aylesbury, addressing them both. "Dalgrish has been gone a good hour."

"Oh, did he come, then?" asked Ursula, absently. "I'd forgotten all about him. I had so many things to think of."

She rose and went up to her aunt. She took one of Mrs. Aylesbury's hands and held it between both her own.

"Heath Hammond and I," she said,

very sweetly and quietly, "have been making a discovery. For a long while past, he has loved me. For a long while past, I haven't cared about anybody but him. I didn't understand my own feelings; I only knew that it was pleasant to be near him and to hear his voice; even to hear, if I may so phrase it, his silences. And now everything has grown clear to both of us, and I have promised to be his wife."

Mrs. Aylesbury sat as if stunned by amazement. "Ursula," she at length dragged out, "this is a thunderbolt!"

"A providential one for me!" shouted the duchess, springing up from her chair. She moved toward Hammond, with her waddling steps, and seized his hand. "You're a famous lawyer now, and, like most famous lawyers, you must go into Parliament. I know your politics; they're against Dalgrish's. In your very first debate, you shall thrash him, thrash him, thrash him out of his boots! And I shall live to see it, though all the doctors in the land should tell me I can't. And afterward I shall die content!"



## A POSSIBILITY

**H**USBAND (*inspecting house and lot with a view to purchase*)—The lot is absurdly small, my dear—scarcely big enough for a flower-bed.

**WIFE** (*fresh from flat*)—Er—couldn't we have a folding flower-bed?



## AT THE CHESS CLUB

**C**OUNTER—It's your move.

**GAMBIT**—Impossible! I moved yesterday.



## WHEN IT WAS TOO LATE

**S**IMMONS—I used to be in love with your wife, Kimmons, but I got over it.

**KIMMONS**—Well, you needn't brag about it—so did I.

## THE SONG

By Clinton Scollard

*OUT of wind and sun and dew  
I would shape a song for you!*

First from out the wind should be  
Happy hints of melody;  
Little rippling slips of tone,  
To the ear of evening known;  
Tiny echoes of the shell  
Breathed into by ocean's swell;  
Lark-note, nightingale and thrush,  
Rustling bough and river rush.

Then the sun should yield its shine,  
Golden words for every line;  
Glints of skyey amber ore—  
Simile and metaphor;  
Throbbing wave-beats, vital, warm,  
Passion in its noblest form,  
Morning's ecstasy of light  
After the surcease of night.

From the globe of dew should come  
Crystals of exordium;  
Essences of prismatic blend  
Joining opening and end;  
And a close of flawless pearl,  
Whorl upon pellucid whorl;  
Every thought as virgin clear  
As the perfect parent sphere.

*Out of wind and sun and dew  
I would shape a song for you!*



## REVENGE

**T**HE PUG—What are you howling at the moon for?

THE MASTIFF—Oh, that's only an excuse. I'm howling to get even with my master for naming me Fido.

## THE TWO AUTOMOBILISTS

ONCE on a Time there were Two Young Men, each of whom Bought an Automobile.

One Young Man, being of a Bold and Audacious nature, said:

"I will make my Machine go so Fast, that I will break all Previous Records."

Accordingly, he did So, and he Flew through the Small Towns like a Red Dragon Pursuing his Prey.

Unheeding all Obstacles in his Mad Career, his Automobile ran into a Wall of Rock, and was dashed to Pieces. Also, the young Man was killed.

The Other Young Man, being of a Timorous and Careful Disposition, started off with great Caution, and Rode at a Slow Pace, pausing now and then, Lest he might Run into Something.

The Result was, that Two Automobiles and an Ice Wagon ran into him from behind, spoiling his Car and Killing the Cautious Young Man.

*Morals:*

This Fable teaches Us, The More Haste The Less Speed, and Delays Are Dangerous.

CAROLYN WELLS.



## AUGURY

AT morn we wept: "Farewell for aye!"  
And parted. Ere the sun had set,  
Again, upon the well-known way,  
Lo! face to face we met.

We smiled. The skies, so long o'ercast,  
Were bright with promise; bravely, then,  
"We part no more!" we cried, and passed,  
Never to meet again!

WILLIAM YOUNG.



## HER WARNING

"MY dear," said the solicitous mother-pig to one of her family, "if you don't stop thinking so much and root more, you will never make a hog of yourself."

## TWO BACHELORS

By G. B. Burgin

DINNER was over at Bulton Towers, and the admiral and his friend sat taking their ease at dessert. They had been friends for years—no one knew exactly why; perhaps they did not know the reason themselves. The dreaminess of the man of letters interested the admiral, who was emphatically the man of action; and he, by mere force of contrast, was the secret hero of the man of letters. This mutual, though carefully concealed, admiration did not prevent the two friends from telling each other home truths. They had already exchanged several of these brusque passages over the dinner-table, and, after the removal of the cloth, were in an equally belligerent mood.

"Don't tell me," said Admiral Sir John Murgatroyd, glaring at his friend. "Pass the port, please; I wasn't telling you anything," said Mr. Arthur Carruthers Penntop-Payne.

"Then, what the—the dickens do you mean by it?" roared the admiral.

"I don't mean anything," mildly remarked Mr. Penntop-Payne.

"That's the worst of a fellow like you," the admiral declared, ferociously attacking the port. "A man like you never does mean anything."

"Why should he?" interrupted Mr. Penntop-Payne, as the admiral motioned him to ring for another bottle. "It is so common to mean things!"

"Common!" The admiral's voice would have drowned the roar of a typhoon. "Common!"

"Yes, common," placidly repeated the other; "every one marries."

"Ev—! Oh!" The admiral was almost speechless. Then he tried sarcasm. "I suppose every one is born,

every one dies; and that you were born, and that you will have to die!"

"I'm afraid so. I'd rather be translated, though."

"That's the worst of you author fellows; you're always thinking of your confounded books."

"Oh, no, I wasn't; I was thinking of Elijah—or Elisha—the chap who went up to heaven in a chariot of fire."

"I don't think you will go upward," retorted the admiral; with deep meaning. He was so pleased with his own joke that he had some more port. "Why do you think I asked you down to Bulton Towers?"

"To—to swear at me?" somewhat timidly queried the other.

The admiral was ashamed. "Have I been swearing at you—much?"

"Oh, pretty much as usual." Mr. Penntop-Payne produced a neat little note-book. "No, there's nothing novel," he declared, after running his eye over a page full of characteristically neat entries. "Same old commonplace expletives; nothing fresh."

"Well, I'm—surprised." The admiral was aghast. Then he "gave sorrow words."

"So am I," said Mr. Penntop-Payne, adding the admiral's last effort to his list. "I had heard that your swearing was original; but I must admit that so far I've been disappointed. It's mere Ratcliffe Highway. There's no originality nowadays. What was it you were saying just now, when I ventured to ring for some more port?"

"Oh, I think you ought to get married."

"What for?"



"What for? Because, sir, it is the duty of every Englishman to get married at this crisis in our country's history. We are spreading all over South Africa."

"Well, what's that got to do with my getting married?" not unreasonably asked Mr. Penntop-Payne.

"What's—! I only supposed that if you married it might some day help us to spread," delicately replied the admiral.

"Oh, I see. Very well; I don't mind. Who's the lady? I suppose it is a duty I owe to literature to get married."

The admiral relaxed. "I'm only bullying you for your good," he said, apologetically.

"It is the mission of our friends to make us thoroughly miserable in providing for our happiness. Last time I was here you insisted on my proposing to Miss Salterby, and then you made me break it off."

"Of course I did. She kicked my dog because she nearly fell over it. If she'd nearly fallen over you after you were married she might have kicked you; and I wasn't going to let you in for that. You'd have wanted to kick me, just to get even."

"Thanks. You're as thoughtful as the steward who provides a basin after he has lured one on board the Channel boat. Does the lady you have in your mind's eye kick dogs?"

"She! Don't you dare to be impertinent! She's the dearest, sweetest woman in the world."

"Then why don't you marry her?"

"I don't feel worthy of her."

Mr. Penntop-Payne bowed to his host. "That's the prettiest compliment I've ever had paid to me. You think I am?"

"Coxcomb!"

"Ah, I knew it wouldn't last," murmured Mr. Penntop-Payne. "You do spoil things so, admiral."

The admiral growled. "I never get any thanks for all the good I try to do."

"It is 'trying.'"

"What do you mean by that? If I were at sea——"

"So you are, admiral; but I don't mind. Who is the lady?"

"Miss Primula Patterne!"

"Phew! I've met her."

"She is coming over to-night after dinner, with her cousin, Lady Coningsby, who is an old friend of mine."

"So she is of mine. They're coming to-night?"

"Yes, to-night. I asked them over to listen to my nightingales."

"Suppose they don't sing?—the nightingales, I mean."

"I'll have them turned off the place. I'd like to see my nightingales not sing when they're expected to do so."

"Oh, very well. Let me see. I've met Miss Patterne several times. Fair hair, hasn't she?"

"No; black as your hat."

"And rather deep voice. Don't like deep voices in women."

"Most musical voice I ever heard," growled the admiral.

"Ah, yes; she's one of those women who always want to read things aloud to one. Now, I hate having people read to me."

"You always did hate everything that was for your good."

"And her hands—what sort of hands has she? I'm very particular about hands."

"She has perfect hands—and mouth," added the admiral, as if he were describing a horse.

"Oh, yes; I remember now. But she has a mole on her right hand, and I particularly detest that sort of thing; it's so affected."

The admiral arose in his fury. "If you go on like this," he said, "I shall forget myself as a host."

"My dear admiral, you've already forgotten yourself. You ask me to eat a dinner and expect me to swallow a bride. Very well; I'll swallow her, if you'll manage it all for me."

"Swal—! Oh, this is too much! But I hear carriage-wheels on the drive." He rang the bell for the butler. "Thompson, go down to the copse and see if those damned nightingales are getting ready to sing."

"Yes, sir," said Thompson, who had

followed the admiral from his last command; "and if so be they ain't, sir?"

"Turn 'em off the place the first thing to-morrow morning," said the admiral. "Come along, Penntop-Payne, and help me to receive the ladies."

Penntop-Payne drew him back, nervously. "Mind, you're to propose to her for me. You go on with her, and I'll take care of the cousin. She's only a cousin by marriage and a good deal younger—a charming woman."

"Daren't even go into action," said the admiral, scornfully. "What d' you call yourself?"

"Oh, I leave that to you; you do most of the calling. How long has Lady Coningsby been a widow?"

But the admiral had already reached the door, and, with old-fashioned courtesy, was welcoming his guests in the hall. Penntop-Payne languidly followed, although conscious of a thrill of excitement at meeting Lady Coningsby again. He had seen a great deal of her in Rome last year, when she was nursing her moribund husband; it suddenly occurred to him that he would like to take up the intimacy again, now that there was no exacting husband requiring her constant attention. He looked at his handsome, middle-aged face in a mirror, and noticed with satisfaction that his tie was particularly well done. Then he followed the admiral, and was received with gentle coldness by Miss Patterne.

"Now," said the admiral, beaming with satisfaction, "if you won't have any coffee, we'll go and hunt up those infernal nightingales."

## II

REGARDLESS of etiquette, the admiral escorted Miss Patterne toward the nightingale copse, while Penntop-Payne followed slowly behind with Lady Coningsby, who sentimentally regarded him in the moonlight and scarcely concealed her pleasure at seeing the handsome author again; both

of them, as a matter of fact, were utterly oblivious of the admiral's refractory nightingales. The admiral, tall, athletic, well preserved, could not help thinking that Miss Patterne was thrown away on that effeminate coxcomb, Penntop-Payne. He made up his mind, as he looked at Miss Patterne in the moonlight, that he would forswear port in future and worship her instead. He had concocted this scheme of matrimony for his friend under the influence of port; and now he began to wish that he had not done so. Any man who tried to arrange another's love-affairs was bound to get into difficulties. He knew perfectly well that he did not shine as a diplomatist, and was conscious of the absurdity of his mission. What business had he to meddle in so dangerous and delicate a matter! The whole thing was an outrage!

Miss Patterne—the ground was rough—took the admiral's arm, and seemed to derive great pleasure from doing so. She had seen him very often lately, and, though he was at least twelve years her senior, his strong, matter-of-fact, vigorous way of regarding the world and all that was in it filled her with satisfaction; she herself was dreamy and sentimental, with a great admiration for strength. Owing to an early disappointment she had never married, and had just passed her fortieth birthday. When a lady passes her fortieth birthday and has never married, it is easy to predict that she will either marry within a twelve-month or become a confirmed old maid. Now, Miss Patterne had not the slightest wish to become a confirmed old maid; such a proceeding seemed harsh to the opposite sex. Added to this were the softening influence of the moonlight, the lovely old oaks under which they walked, and an occasional trill in the distance which betokened that the nightingales were getting ready to obey the admiral's command. She began to wish that the admiral would walk by her side forever and subdue his quarter-deck voice to whispers meant for her alone.

The admiral also was moved by these preliminary strains of the nightingales. "I'm deuced glad Thompson routed 'em up a bit," he said, with satisfaction. "What's the good of having birds on the estate if they won't sing when they're wanted to? They played me that trick last week. I'd have clapped them in irons if I could have got hold of them."

Miss Patterne looked up at the admiral in the moonlight; the admiral looked down at Miss Patterne. "Ah, you're such a strong man, admiral!" sighed the lady. "You always get everything to do what you wish. Even the nightingales sing at your command."

"I wish I did get—" The admiral stopped short, in confusion. "There are some things a man never can get. Look at that fellow, Penntop-Payne, behind us! He always gets all he wants, without any trouble."

"Does he?" inquired Miss Patterne, in surprise. "What do you mean? He is a very successful man; but he always seems to me to be singularly unhappy."

Here was the admiral's chance. "You see," he said, with an affectation of sentimentality which sat rather oddly on his strong features, "the poor chap's never married; and a man without a wife is like—is like a ship sailing through what our parson calls 'rudderless chaos!'"

"Yes," said Miss Patterne, absently, "I suppose he is, although I don't quite understand the simile. By the way, admiral, you have never married, either."

"No, I haven't," said the admiral, hastily. "Never seem to have had time."

"But now you are on the retired list," suggested the lady. "You have so nobly fulfilled your duty to your country in so many ways, admiral, that I, a woman, scarcely like to suggest the only neglect to do so on your part."

"By Jove! It never occurred to me," said the admiral, stopping and rubbing his forehead in his perplexity.

"Of course, my dear lady, you are always right." Then he remembered his mission. "But, you see, I promised Penntop-Payne to find him a wife."

"Why?" asked Miss Patterne. She let the others pass them. "Most men generally have trouble enough over their own love-affairs."

"I don't know." The admiral stopped again, then moved on a few steps. "It never occurred to me in that light when I promised——"

"What did you promise?" inquired Miss Patterne, as she caught up with him.

The admiral again put her hand within his arm. "My dear lady," he said, almost paternally, "Penntop-Payne is the best fellow in the world, and wants a wife."

Miss Patterne withdrew her hand from the admiral's arm. "I should have thought," she said, coldly, "that if Mr. Penntop-Payne wanted a wife he would not have the slightest difficulty in finding one."

"I think he's afraid."

"Couldn't he advertise in the *Times*, when all other means failed? If report speaks truly, he can always advertise himself."

"Ah, but you don't know what shy beggars these author fellows are," declared the admiral, returning to the charge. "They're terrible on paper—make love by pages and pages; but in real life they always ask a man of action to fight their battles for them." Then he stopped abruptly, and Miss Patterne, who was rather shrewd, at once drew her own conclusions. She determined to astonish the admiral.

"He has been seeing something of you lately," said the admiral, fumbling for a move in the right direction.

"Who has?"

"Penntop-Payne."

"Oh, Mr. Penntop-Payne! Yes, I believe he has," said the lady, absently. "One always sees him posing in a corner at places. But I don't think he took very much interest in me."

"Oh, yes, he did. We've been talking about you all dinner-time."

"Well, what did you say?" inquired Miss Patterne, with all a woman's curiosity.

The admiral was an essentially truthful man, and it would have been a little difficult for him to repeat all that had passed between himself and Penn-top-Payne. "Oh, well, we talked about you," he said, vaguely.

"Yes?" Miss Patterne evinced a little more eagerness than she had hitherto displayed. "What about me?"

"Oh, we talked about——"

"Yes?"

"Your—your—hair," said the admiral; "he said it was fair."

"I thought authors were observant men. I am not a vain woman, but I pride myself on my dark hair."

"Yes; I don't know how he came to make such an absurd mistake," cheerfully admitted the admiral. "From hair we got to voices, and I said how much I liked yours."

"And what did he say? You must know, admiral, that I am rather touchy about my voice and hands."

"We got to your hands afterward."

"Yes?"

"Oh, he said that he—he said that you had a mole on your hand." The admiral felt that this was hardly satisfactory, but what could he do?

Miss Patterne put up a very pretty hand in the moonlight. "Do you object to moles, admiral?" she said, rather acidly.

The admiral so far forgot himself as to kiss the mole on Miss Patterne's hand. Miss Patterne blushed in the moonlight.

"I think moles are adorable," said the admiral, with nautical directness. "Your hands themselves are more than enough to bring one to your feet."

A nightingale began to sing in the distance. Some new feeling took possession of the admiral, and he motioned Miss Patterne to stay where they were.

There was a laughing light in Miss Patterne's beautiful eyes as she turned around and confronted the admiral. "Well?" she said, with a di-

rectness which was strongly opposed to her accustomed languor. "You have something on your mind, admiral. If we are to continue dear friends——"

"Dear friends!" Yes, that's it," said the admiral, hastily. "We've always been the dearest friends in the world, haven't we?"

"We have." Miss Patterne put rather a strong emphasis on the "have". "And now, admiral, I wish to know what it is you have on your mind. Two gentlemen do not discuss a lady at dinner unless they have some object in doing so. What is it?"

"What is it?" The admiral prevaricated.

"Yes, what is it? Don't hesitate. I know all your little tricks of speech and ways of thought; you cannot deceive me. You are much too gallant a man to attempt to deceive a poor, helpless woman."

"By Jove, yes; so I am! You are the last woman in the world I should wish to deceive," said the admiral, fervently.

"That being so, perhaps you will have the goodness to tell me why you and Mr. Penn-top-Payne were discussing my—my points at dinner."

"Your points!"

"Yes," said Miss Patterne, a little bitterly; "my points!"

The admiral began to feel very guilty. He had committed the meanness of discussing Miss Patterne's personal appearance with Mr. Penn-top-Payne, and Miss Patterne was very properly indignant.

"We both owe you an apology," he said, somewhat lamely. "It is needless to tell you that I have never spoken of you but with the highest admiration and—and respect."

Miss Patterne's lips quivered for a moment. "And this—this author?" She stopped suddenly. "Now, admiral, tell me what it is all about. Does the man wish to marry me?"

"Yes." The admiral blurted out the bald fact. "He does."

"Who put such a preposterous idea into his head?"

"I—I did," humbly confessed the admiral.

"You!" There was an accent of deeply wounded feeling in Miss Patterne's voice—an accent which was a revelation to the admiral.

"Yes. I see now that I was a bigger fool than usual ever to have thought of such a thing."

"And you are commissioned to do Mr. Penntop-Payne's wooing for him?" asked Miss Patterne, turning as if to go back to the house.

"I was," said the admiral; "but I renounce that commission entirely. We both owe you an apology for conduct unbecoming gentlemen, and if you'll only forgive me——"

"If I forgive you?" Miss Patterne smiled through the tears which had begun to fall; "if I forgive you, admiral, what will you do?"

"Whatever you like," said the admiral.

"Then never speak to me of the subject again. Mr. Penntop-Payne is the last man in the world I would marry. It is bad enough to have to read his books. It would be worse to have to read him for the rest of my life."

"What sort of man would you care to marry?" asked the admiral, eagerly.

"He must be brave, strong and distinguished-looking," said Miss Patterne, carefully checking off the admiral's points. "He must have served his country like a hero, and he must have a deep and abiding reverence for women, although he has never married. Do you know of any one like that, admiral?"

"Wish I did," said the admiral, ruefully. A light suddenly dawned upon him, but he was the most modest of men. He was not, in his own estimation, a hero; but he had always shown a deep and abiding reverence for women. "If it's no use talking about Penntop-Payne," he said; "shall we go on and listen to those infernal nightingales?"

"It is of no use mentioning his name to me," said Miss Patterne, with de-

cision. "No, I don't think I care to hear the nightingales to-night, thank you; they seem to be singing out of tune!" She turned back toward the house, and the admiral followed.

"Miss Patterne!" he said, huskily.

"Yes, admiral?"

"I have done all I could for the other fellow, haven't I?"

"Ye—es."

"And the matter is ended forever?"

"The matter is ended forever."

"Then, will you do me the honor to be my wife?"

Her great eyes blazed up at his in the moonlight. "Are you asking me out of pity?"

"Pity! No, certainly not. Having to ask you for that other fellow has made me realize that I love you myself. If you can put up with such a battered old hulk and teach me how to live, that is all I ask; and it is a great deal more than I deserve. Can you? Will you?"

"I—I will; I can," faltered Miss Patterne, putting her hand—the one with the mole on it—within the admiral's. "And now, let us go and listen to those delightful nightingales."

"Confound the nightingales!" roared the admiral. "I'd rather listen to your sweet voice than all the sickly nightingales in the world. If they dare to interrupt us when we're married, I'll have them all turned off the place." Then he halted, in dismay. "What on earth am I to say to Penntop-Payne?"

"I don't think you need say anything. They've forgotten all about us and are evidently making love to each other under pretense of listening to the nightingales."

"But he asked me to propose to you for him."

"Very well! You did so. I refused him and have accepted you. Nothing can be clearer."

"Nothing—except having to explain it to him," said the admiral. "He mightn't think it quite so clear."

"Oh, I don't fancy he'll need any explanation. Authors have short memories, and he has probably for-



gotten all about us by this time. You know, Lady Coningsby saw a great deal of him in Rome last year."

"But why did he wish to marry you?" queried the admiral.

Miss Patterne began to laugh. "I expect you bullied him into it, admiral."

"By George, I expect I did," said the admiral. Then they joined the others, who looked greatly annoyed at the intrusion and declared that the nightingales were not doing their best.

After his guests had gone the admiral took Penntop-Payne into the library and faced him like a man and a sea-dog.

"Have you forgotten all that dashed nonsense I talked to you to-night about marrying?" he asked Penntop-Payne, as the latter mixed himself a soda-and-brandy.

"Forgotten! No, I—haven't," said Penntop-Payne, rather avoiding his friend's eye. "You were so imperative that I——"

"What?"

"Proposed to Lady Coningsby, and she's accepted me."

"You have!"

"Yes. Why not? You surely weren't in earnest about that rubbish with regard to Miss Patterne?"

"I was, though. Fortunately, she wouldn't listen to it."

Penntop-Payne dropped his tumbler with a crash. "Good heavens, admiral, you don't mean you——"

"Oh, yes, I did!" The admiral somewhat maliciously enjoyed the situation.

"Of course she's accepted me?" Penntop-Payne said, in agony.

"No, she hasn't."

"And what then?"

"Oh, then I proposed to her myself." The admiral mixed himself a stiff brandy-and-soda.

"And she rejected you! Poor old chap! You're getting a bit past this kind of thing, admiral."

"Rejected me? Not a bit of it!" The admiral drank his brandy-and-soda with manifest relish.

Penntop-Payne strode to the fireplace with a dismayed whistle. "Don't look so infernally pleased with yourself, admiral. Do you know what will happen?"

"Yes; we shall all get married."

"There's no doubt about that. But the first time there's a little rift within the lute the ladies will exchange confidences, and my wife will be sure to hear all about this proposal."

"My wife," said the admiral, indignantly, "is much too true a woman to talk about so sacred a matter with another woman."

"That shows how little you know of women."

"Oh, we shall see," said the admiral, joyously.

"That's the worst of it. We *shall*!" said Penntop-Payne; and he crawled sadly off to bed.



## A SUITABLE MATCH

A PSEUDO big chief of the Sioux  
Sued hard for the hand of sweet Sue;  
He carried the day,  
And the marriage, they say,  
Of Sue and the Sioux will ensue.



## NEWS

CLARA—Did you know that I was going to marry Charlie?

MAUD—Why, no; all I heard was that you were engaged to him.

## THE HEART'S DESIRE

By Madison Cawein

GOD made her body out of foam and flowers,  
 And for her hair the dawn and midnight blent;  
 Then called two planets from their heavenly towers,  
 And in her face, divinely eloquent,  
 Gave them a firmament.

God made her heart of rosy ice and fire,  
 Of snow and flame, that freezes while it burns;  
 And of a star-beam and a moth's desire  
 He shaped her soul, toward which my longing turns,  
 And all my dreaming yearns.

So is my life a prisoner unto passion,  
 Enslaved of her who gives nor sign, nor word;  
 So in the lovely cage her sweet looks fashion  
 Is love endungeoned, like some golden bird  
 That sings but is not heard.

Could it but once convince her with beseeching!  
 But once compel her as the sun the South!  
 Could it but once, fond arms around her reaching,  
 Upon the red carnation of her mouth  
 Dew its eternal drouth!

Then might I rise victorious over sadness,  
 O'er fate and change, and, with but little care,  
 Torched by the glory of that moment's gladness,  
 Breast the black mountain of my life's despair;  
 And die, or do and dare.



## LIFE SEEMS SADDER NOW

"SO Scraps and his wife have buried the hatchet at last, eh?"  
 "Yes, poor things! They seem to feel their bereavement most keenly."



## ADDITIONAL PROOF

COBWIGGER—I know a fellow who wrote a popular novel and made one hundred thousand dollars out of it. I thought you said literature didn't pay?  
 PENFIELD—Neither it does.

## “ONE TOUCH OF NATURE”

By Edward S. Van Zile

SHE was so heartily weary of it all! Often, during the triumphant years following the historic furor that she had created as a débutante the small hours had found her physically exhausted by the strain that is part of the price paid by a woman, in these mad days, for social success. “There is no royal road to pleasure,” she had reflected again and again, after she had dismissed her maid and sat waiting in her boudoir for sleep to tempt her toward her bedroom. But heretofore there had been nothing of protest in her musings, nothing of revolt against the exactions made by what the work-a-day world erroneously calls a life of leisure. At two o’clock in the morning she had felt, many a time, a bodily lassitude that was not wholly unpleasant, a physical depression that had been frequently accompanied by great mental exhilaration. After her marriage, even more than before it, there had been keen delight in recalling, in the silence and privacy of her lonely apartments, the social victories that the day’s campaign had vouchsafed to her. The tribute to her beauty that a man had paid by word or glance, the homage to her leadership that a woman had reluctantly displayed, a whisper of admiration caught from the throng, an invitation extended to her that offered a promise of further triumphs; these had been among the mental confections on which her mind had been wont to feast in the small hours.

But to-night, to her amazement and disquietude, she had found that

she was not merely weary in body, but depressed in spirit. She had caught a glimpse of a gleaming planet in the Winter sky, as she had rolled homeward at the end of the first half of the cotillion, and, somehow, there had flashed into her soul a revelation that was both hideous and fascinating. The cosmic method of comparison had of a sudden conflicted with her perfect egotism, and the steady, mocking glare of that remote, glowing world—Jupiter or Saturn or Venus, or some other planetary marvel—had seemed to bring to her reluctant comprehension the astounding pettiness and insignificance of her own achievements, hopes, fears, ambitions, aspirations, regrets. Then she had laughed aloud, drawing back from the window of the coupé and readjusting her opera-cloak about her shoulders. She would start a new fad! What the inner circle needed to regain its sanity and poise was a novel point of view. The study of astronomy would restore society to a more reasonable attitude toward the cosmos. How ludicrous it was for a few lucky people to imagine that the centre of gravity of the universe was to be found this morning at Sherry’s! Ash Wednesday was at hand. She would give a series of illustrated astronomical lectures in her drawing-room presently, as a kind of Lenten antidote to the abnormal egotism of metropolitan society.

As she sat, *en négligé*, beside a table covered with novels and magazines, outstretched in graceful relaxation upon a reclining chair, she smiled

wearily at the absurd fancies that a fleeting glimpse of stellar splendor had begotten. She wondered vaguely if her husband had returned from his club. What would he think of her quixotic plan to restore society to a less self-satisfied, self-assertive frame of mind? She could recall the time when he had not been indifferent to her mental vagaries, unsympathetic, remote; when such fancies as had come to her to-night would have awakened his keenest interest. But despite many mental and temperamental affinities, they had drifted apart; well-mated, so far as the world could see, but living separate existences that came together only on the surface. If they had had children, would it not have all been very different? He had longed, she knew, for fatherhood, and there had been times when she had felt a vague misgiving, a faint suspicion that she had sacrificed their truest happiness upon the altar of ambition. But does not the nursery render the kind of social supremacy that she had won an impossibility? Surely.

Of what avail were these morbid musings? She would read for a while, and then sleep until ten. A day of great activity confronted her, for Lent was close at hand. Presently, to her mingled surprise and satisfaction, she found herself absorbed in a magazine story, a homely tale told in the dialect of the New England fisher-folk, a *patois* that came to her like the echo of a Summer breeze playing across a tumbling sea. With delicate art the writer had awakened her interest at the outset in the woman who sat at midnight beside the cradle of her sick child, listening for the footsteps of a belated fisherman. Would the baby live until her husband's return? Would he ever come back to her? Since sunset the storm had raged, and even now the winds were growing wilder as the breathing of the child waxed louder, and the sea and the sick one tossed ever more restlessly upon their respective beds. The mother prayed, more re-

proachfully than pleadingly, that God would not take them both from her, her child and her man; would not abandon her in this the hour of her sorest need.

The very simplicity of the *motif*, threadbare from its long literary service, had saved it from failure in the hands of a master craftsman. The element of suspense had been well maintained. Here sat a *mondaine*, sated with the luxuries and triumphs of an exalted social career, but with her vanity still unsatisfied, following with utter self-forgetfulness the struggle of a humble woman's soul to find God in the darkness of despair, to discover a gleam of hope in the blackness of impending doom. There was no hysteria, no striving after lurid effects in this realistic tale of human love and sorrow. The simple remedies that were the fisherwoman's only weapons in her fight against death for the possession of her child, the howling of the wind outside the cottage, the broken words of supplication and endearment that fell from her white lips, the baby's flushed face, with the tousled yellow hair against the rumpled pillow, the mother's straining eyes as she turned them from the bed to gaze at the outer door, while she listened for a heavy tread that should overcome the raucous uproar of the tempest—all these the reader saw and heard, forgetful, for the moment, of aught else but the great, universal mother-love that stirred within her world-weary soul.

And when he came—the fisherman saved from the perils of the deep—came with cheer and hope in his bronzed face and husky voice, and the child, roused by his presence, looked up at him and smiled, the crisis of the fever safely passed, there were tears in eyes that the world, despite their beauty, had called cold; new lines of softness around a mouth that, with all its voluptuous symmetry, had been growing hard of late.

She closed the magazine and replaced it by the night-lamp upon the table beside her. There had come a flush to her wan cheeks, and her eyes

were no longer heavy from lack of sleep. For a time she sat there, gazing dreamily at the shadows that haunted the hangings at the further end of the room. Presently she arose, brushing the hair, that her maid had released, back from her forehead with a hand that trembled slightly. She stood for a moment before a full-length mirror, rejoicing in the beauty of the picture that it framed. "The child had its mother's face." A half-mocking smile came to her lips as she recalled those words of the tale that she had read, but there was no mockery in her eyes as they met her own gaze in the glass.

Turning from the mirror she crossed the room hurriedly toward the hall door, as one who doubted her own stability of purpose. The hall, dimly lighted, seemed to check her steps for a moment as she stood motionless upon the threshold of her room, gazing into its shadow-filled depths. She could hear the ticking of a tall clock, the

strange sighs and creakings that always beset a great house in the darker hours. Then, quickly, noiselessly, one slender hand pressed against her throbbing heart, she sped down the corridor and rapped gently at her husband's door.

"Arthur!"

His voice came to her through the darkness:

"Elinor! What is it? Are you——?"

"I am very lonely, Arthur," she murmured, her arms about his neck, her lips close to his. Then she drew away from him for a moment.

"I have been reading a story, Arthur. It is a wonderful bit of work. I want your opinion of it."

"What? now? to-night?" he asked, a note of amazement echoing through his voice.

"No, my dear; not to-night; to-morrow will do," she replied. But again her arms wreathed his neck, and gently, tenderly, her lips sought his.



## A TOAST AFTER VADE

NARCISSUS of these later days,  
I am an arch self-lover;  
But wine-cup and not stream displays  
The beauties I discover.

And watching e'er the color rare  
That's given to my complexion,  
I dote so on my features there  
I swallow the reflection!

THOMAS WALSH.



## AMPLE CAUSE FOR THANKSGIVING

MRS. KIDDER—Well, Uncle Grimm, for what are you especially thankful to-day?

UNCLE GRIMM—I am thankful that little Theodosia ain't twins and little Stuyvesant ain't triplets!



## EN FAMILLE

"Where are the Summer girls now?"

THE Summer girls are back in town,  
 From Bangor to Oshkosh;  
 Fair Kathryne's dainty arms so brown  
 Are helping mother wash.  
 And debonair Lucille, who wore  
 Some stones as big as panels,  
 Is back in her department store,  
 Dispensing Canton flannels.

And gentle Jane and Claribel,  
 Teresa and Irene,  
 Nina, Ethel and Estelle—  
 All girls of gracious mien,  
 Who turned down foreign noblemen (?)  
 And titled royal fighters—  
 Are getting each five dollars per  
 For pounding on type-writers.

And Tessie Penhyn-Astor-Brooks,  
 Who was of royal stock,  
 Is canvassing subscription-books  
 On "How to Darn a Sock";  
 And paste-bejeweled Genevieve,  
 Who said she snubbed a rich lord,  
 No longer hears the billows heave—  
 She's working at her switch-board!

F. P. PITZER.



## A KIND HEART

MRS. VON BLUMER—My dear, you didn't tell me you had such a pretty  
 type-writer.

VON BLUMER—I didn't want to hurt your feelings.



## LOUD

HUSBAND—Have I got to wear those socks you got for me?  
 WIFE—But they're beautiful. Look at the clocks.

"Yes; alarm-clocks!"

# THE STORY OF THREE PEOPLE

By Owen Oliver

**A** MORAL is useless unless you can point it at somebody. I have never been able to apply the moral of this story; so I write it down for others to try.

There were three people in it, and they were all friends of mine. There might have been a fourth, but he was wise. Wisdom is a painful virtue to possess.

The first person was George Travers, a handsome, well-groomed fellow, who made money and friends; kindly, clever and a trifle flighty; a man's man and a woman's man, too—that was George. Of these three people he was the worst, if you will, and I liked him best.

The second person was Margaret Travers, wife of George, a woman of societies and affairs; blonde, full-blown, and beautiful; a man's edge to her intellect and a woman's edge to her tongue—that was Margaret. She was the second best of them, and I liked her second best.

The third person was Violet Dering, a tall, dark girl with eyes; good to look at, but not good-looking; a woman who wrote poems and read people—that was Violet. She was the best of them; and I liked her least.

They could all speak for themselves, and they spoke to me freely, keeping back no more than men and women always do. Possibly, the moral is in what they left unspoken; but I can only tell you what they said. I come in merely as the chorus.

George spoke to me first. It was a chill morning in April, and I was nursing a long-standing cold before the fire. He did not ask me about it, but

flung his hat on the table and himself in a chair.

"I've come to a stiff place, old man," he said.

I got out the decanter, pushed over the cigar-box, and held my peace. I am the one who was wise.

"Probably," he continued, "you can guess?"

"Yes."

"You are surprised?"

"No."

"My wife—I have never spoken to any one about her before——"

"Your wife is a good woman."

"Too good!"

"For you?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "You can say what you please about me."

"I am not likely to say anything against you." Our friendship was more than a word.

"I won't listen to anything against—Violet."

"I have nothing to say against Violet. I wish she had kept out of your life."

"It wasn't life—before."

"Nonsense!"

He laid his hand on my shoulder—an unsteady hand.

"You don't think so, old man."

I stared into the fire for a long time. Men and women are men and women; and an empty heart is an empty heart.

"What right have you to—live?"

"The right of any one."

"You are not 'one.'"

He laughed, bitterly. "Even a married man has a heart."

"So has his wife."

He looked at me under his eyebrows. "Do you think she has?"

I stared at the fire again. "Yes, I think so." I had not pushed the opinion to demonstration. I liked my friend better than his wife.

"I wonder if she would feel it much if—anything happened?"

"Very much."

"You don't imagine that she cares for me?"

I suppose it was my business to lie to him; but it is hard to lie to one's friends.

"She has not the consolation of caring for any one else," I said, slowly.

"She couldn't!"

"She does not permit herself the attempt."

"Her virtues are in evidence!" He poured some whiskey out for himself. "A virtuous woman can be very trying!"

"A man can be trying without being virtuous."

"People don't usually find me trying, do they, old man?"

I shook my head. "You're very easy to like."

He played on the table with his fingers. "I wonder why?"

"Because it's easy to you to like other people. You don't want to hurt anybody, George?" He shook his head. "Not even—"

"Not even *her*. I've been on the point of suggesting a separation, time after time; but I've thought of—what you said. She has no one else—I almost wish she had."

"She could have." He raised his eyebrows. "Man alive, don't you know what a beautiful woman she is?"

"I used to think so, years ago; when I thought that she—cared for me. We weren't suited, really; but we jogged along, somehow. I was fond of her in a way, till she changed so."

"I have seen no change in her."

"I suppose you did not notice. It was about the time that you were ill."

"No, I did not notice. Perhaps you fancied it?"

He shook his head. "It is evident enough. She is as bored with me as I with her. You don't know what it is

to live with a woman who jars you every time you see her—hear her."

"You bore it lightly till Violet Dering came along."

"Till I knew what I had missed! After all, I have a life to live."

"So has Violet." It was my best card.

"Without me?" It was his.

"God knows!" According to my theory a man lives his life alone; but a woman is different.

"Gods' hearts don't break!" He got up and paced the room.

"If your hearts are china, they must suffer."

He sat down again. "Must they?" He leaned forward toward me. "If I ask Violet—"

"She can't give you what you want."

"I want *her*."

"You want her as she is—a good woman. You can't have her."

"I want her anyhow. I can't do without her."

"You can try."

"Try!" He laughed, discordantly. "Do you think we haven't tried?"

"Go away."

"I went away—and came back."

"Don't come back."

He rose and stood by the fire. "I think of her when I get up and when I lie down; when I am at work and when I am at play; when I am silent and when I am talking. I am thinking of her now. I want her—*want* her. Margaret doesn't want me, unless it is to talk at. She is clever at saying things that sting."

"I have never known Margaret to speak harshly to any one, unless it was deserved."

"Violet wouldn't say things, even if I deserved them. She would let me hurt and hurt, and give me a smile at the end. Violet! Oh, there aren't any words to tell what I think of her!"

I said nothing for a long time. There seemed nothing to say.

"It is a terrible thing," I told him at last.

"A terrible thing!"

"Face it."

"I have faced it."

"For Violet's sake. If you care for her——"

"Care for her! What do you suppose I shall do?"

"I don't know."

"Neither do I," he said.

Then he went; and I sat shaking my head helplessly at the fire. I knew what he would do, unless one of the women saved him. I was not sure that Margaret could, or that Violet would.

I had been thinking for half an hour when Mrs. Travers was announced. She inquired about my cold, and told me the latest scandals. I answered in monosyllables until she stopped. Then I turned to her.

"Well, Margaret?"

"It is—my husband."

"My dearest friend."

"He, or I?"

"Of course—you." I meant him; but I did not wish to hurt her.

"I have no business to complain of him."

"No."

"You can stop me, if you choose."

I stirred the fire, cautiously. "You had better tell me, I think."

"I presume I can speak to you in confidence?"

"No one but you would ask the question." Margaret was always mistrustful. Therefore I did not wholly trust her.

"You know he does not love me."

"How should I know?"

She raised her eyebrows. "No one but you would ask the question!"

"I will not ask it."

"You know also that I—I do not wish to say it."

"I understand."

"You know, too, that he and Violet Dering—" I poked the fire almost to destruction. "I do not expect you to admit it; but you *do*."

"Yes," I admitted.

"You know the sort of woman that she is."

"She is a good woman."

Margaret laughed, scornfully. "I should have remembered that she is a man's woman."

"She is not mine. I suppose you can take my word, Margaret?" She nodded. "Violet is a good woman—a very good woman. But I do not care greatly for her."

Margaret leaned back in her chair and sighed. I did not understand the sigh—then.

"We will say that she is a good woman," she said; "I beg your pardon—a *very* good woman. Her goodness is not of the kind to prevent an open scandal."

"Openness does not make the offense."

"It is the open offense that the world judges."

"It is not a question of social decorum, but of—people's lives."

"The lives of people who live in society."

"We will look at it from their point of view." She would certainly look at it from no other.

"If she goes away with him—I will put it plainly—what is the result?"

"Your husband is ruined, probably."

"And she?"

"Certainly."

She leaned a little further back in her chair and looked at me. "Do you forget—*me*?"

"You are safe. The social forces will be on your side."

"People will not blame me?"

"No."

"My position and power for good will be unimpaired?"

"Yes."

She smiled, quietly. There was a pink flush in her cheeks—I had never seen her look more lovely.

"Perhaps it will be for the best!"

I sat up in my chair and gripped the arms. "How about—them?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I have told you that I do not care for him. You cannot expect me to care for her."

"I care very much for him; I also care——"

"For her?" Margaret's voice was shrill.

"For the honor of a good woman. She *is* a good woman."

"We are speaking of the future."

"I would save them from the future."

"You cannot."

"I cannot; but you—if you spoke to George? He has a sense of duty."

She looked up at me, suddenly. I was dazed for a moment. She is a handsome woman, as I have said—china-blue eyes and pretty, pale hair. I always admired her eyes and hair.

"Has it never occurred to you that I might wish to be free? that I have a heart? I thought you understood. But men so easily forget——"

There was nothing to remember, really; but women exaggerate things. I might have pressed her hand, on special occasions. I think I did kiss her once or twice. I was ill, and no one thought I could recover. It was nothing but what a friend might do; and we were friends.

"I do not forget anything, Margaret. He is your husband, and my friend."

She nodded, approvingly. "You are loyal. It will be a comfort to us to think that *we* were—as we have been." She touched my hand. I had never been blind to her faults; but I had liked her.

"I would stop it if I could," I persisted, unsteadily.

"And I would not."

She sat upright, and I knew that argument was useless.

"Then there is nothing more to be said."

"Nothing more at present." She rose and smoothed out her draperies. She is a woman who carries flowing robes well. "Afterward—I shall have a divorce, of course."

"Yes."

"Do you think people will say anything if I marry again?"

"No."

"Whoever it is?"

"Whoever it is." She smiled once more—I had not seen her look so girlish for years. "You are above suspicion, Margaret."

"You know that I have done my duty by him," she said. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Margaret." Then she went.

The room always seemed bare when Margaret was gone; but this afternoon it was empty. It was not *she* that I missed, but my idea of her. The lover of an ideal is more to be pitied than any one—except the ideal.

"Two of my little tin gods have come off their pedestals to-day," I told myself. "I will go and uncrown the other!" So I went to Violet Dering.

"I have something unpleasant to discuss," I told her, bluntly. She faced me, bravely.

"We need not discuss it unpleasantly," she said.

"It is about George Travers."

"Of course."

"You know he does not love his wife."

"You know she does not love him."

"He loves you."

"And I love him." Her eyes met mine, unflinchingly.

"It is not right—you know it is not right, Violet."

"Some things are neither right nor wrong; only unalterable."

"But the thing that you can alter—you know what I mean, Violet? what it will come to—you can prevent it." She laughed, softly.

"Do you remember the Ripple Song?"

Where my lover calls I go—  
Shame it were to treat him coldly!

That is how I feel about it. Nothing is too much for him to ask of me."

"The ripple ran red afterward."

"I am brave enough to give him my life."

"It were braver to refuse it. Think what it means to you!"

"You can leave me out of the question."

"Do what is best for him."

She laid her hand gently on my arm. "You love him," she said. "So do I. Let us think what is best for him. Think!"

I thought. "He would lose his career, his position, his friends. What can you give him?"



She smiled. "Love!"

"Love," I echoed, absently. I could measure the other things; but not this.

"Love," she repeated. "Think! He loses less than I. A man can recover himself. No, don't speak yet. His life is so empty! His talents—you know how great they are—are stunted for the want of—love! She has been a drag on him—I don't say it is her fault; but she has—I shall do him a service if I free him from her."

"I will not listen to anything against her," I said, sharply. "She is a good woman."

"Good—for you." Violet's eyes flashed with sudden light. "You need not be afraid; I shall not tell any one. She is not good for him."

"Are you?"

She drew a deep breath. "While he thinks so," she said. "If he alters, I can go."

"If you went now, he would get over it."

"The ache would soon dull; not so soon as you think, but it would. Only, he wouldn't be the same man. He would shrink—I want to make him great—to see him grow, if only for a few years. It doesn't matter what becomes of me."

"I have known you since you were a child, Violet. I beg of you—if I thought that prayer were any use, I would pray of you—let him go."

"He can go when he wishes."

"He cannot wish."

"Then—" a wonderful light came into her eyes—"if he cannot do without me, he shall have me."

"Have you counted the cost?"

"All I have to give, all—all!"

"You know it is wrong."

"If it is best for him, I will do wrong."

"You don't want to do wrong, Violet?"

She sobbed, tearlessly. "All my life I have prayed to do right."

"Then I do not understand——"

"No," she rose with one hand on her chair, "you do not understand. It is *love*! Go, please go!"

I took her hand and raised it to my lips. "Whatever happens, Violet," I said, "God bless you."

"God bless *you*," she said, "because you love him."

When I have doubted my deserts most I have been glad to know that Violet blessed me.

They went away the next day. I met Strange at the club, and he told me.

"It is a pity," he reflected, "messing up his life like that. He ought to have had more sense; but when a girl gets hold of a fellow—poor old Travers!"

I agreed with him.

Going home, I met Mrs. Gooding, and she stopped me. She was tearful, poor old thing!

"I can't talk about it," she said. "Travers and Violet Dering! Such a dear girl! He ought to be ashamed of himself."

I agreed with her.

In the afternoon I tried vainly to evade Mrs. Sharp.

"I see that you know all about it," she said. "Of course, Mrs. Travers will get a divorce. Nobody can blame *her*. Such an excellent woman!"

I agreed with her also and took refuge at my sister's.

"I'm sick of hearing about it," I groaned. "Don't say a word, Lucy."

She nodded and went on with her reading for nearly a minute. Then she looked up.

"I suppose Mrs. Travers will get a divorce," she said.

"I don't mind," I said, testily.

Lucy shrugged her shoulders. "If you don't mind," she said, "she will marry *you*."

I did mind. So I went abroad, and Mrs. Travers married Barton, the banker, instead. It would enlarge her sphere of philanthropic work, she wrote, and Providence had been very kind to her.

When I was at Rome I met George and Violet. They had been married for some time, and were still ridicu-

lously in love with each other. Providence, they told me, had given the fullness of life to them.

Therefore it appears that Providence has no moral to point at any of the three. I am glad for their sakes,

since, as I said, they were all my friends; but it seems an unjust dispensation that the inconvenience of two years' exile should have fallen on me—who kept carefully out of the whole affair!



## NOT UNDERSTANDING

BECAUSE you do not understand,  
     I open all my heart to you;  
     Tell all the things I hope to do,  
 And all the dreams my heart has planned.  
 With eyes serene you wisely nod—  
     Because you do not understand.

Because you do not understand,  
     I tell you of my love and hate,  
     My sorrow and my fear of fate;  
 That which I crave and know is banned.  
 You smile with wise, unseeing eyes—  
     Because you do not understand.

Because you do not understand,  
     I tell you of my grief and care.  
     It adds no jot to what you bear;  
 You are too simply, singly planned.  
 I ease my whole sick soul to you—  
     Because—you cannot understand!

ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.



## AS USUAL

HUSBAND—Where do you want to go?  
 WIFE—Oh, I don't know—anywhere where I can spend money.  
 "But I thought you wanted a change?"



## A COMMON CASE

"THOSE two are always together. Are they married?"  
 "I believe *she* is."

# THE PERFECTING OF HARTMAN

By Harold Eyre

IN one of the Americanized hotels which have invaded London, the artist and his manager sat at breakfast. It was the morning after the farewell recital prior to their departure for the United States.

In accordance with his invariable custom, the manager was reading the criticisms in the morning papers. Mr. Baldwin knew nothing whatever of music, and, although in most things a man of common sense, he regarded musical critics with profound respect.

Presently he looked up with a perplexed face. "Listen to this," he said, "from the *Times*."

"Don't trouble to read it," interposed the artist. "I can imagine just what the *Times* has to say about me; it has said it before."

The manager laid down his paper. "I cannot understand," he remarked, with emphasis, "why you are so indifferent to the attitude of the critics."

"Because their attitude doesn't interest me."

"Doesn't interest you!" repeated the manager, scornfully; "the idea of a musician not being interested in his press-notices!"

"But I am not a musician," corrected the young man, maliciously. "Your critics say I have only a technique. Isn't that what you were going to read to me from the *Times*?"

Baldwin hesitated. "Not exactly. This is rather different from the ordinary criticism."

"Oh, let me hear it, by all means, if it will make you feel better."

With the air of one keeping his temper under difficulties, the manager

began to read. "I'll skip the first part," he explained, parenthetically, "and just give you the summing-up:

"His final number was the abominable piano transcription of the Tannhäuser Overture, distorted with runs and arpeggios and generally butchered to make a technical holiday. Like everything else on the programme, it was applauded rapturously by an indiscriminating audience.

"Mr. Hartman's most sincere friends can only regret that he has elected to appeal to the public solely by his facility as a virtuoso. His programme yesterday was obviously designed to amaze the crowd by his witchery of tone, his sparkling clarity of enunciation in rapid running or staccato passages, and his immense resources of power. As a demonstration of the technical possibilities of his instrument it was magnificent—but it was not music. Real musical feeling was painfully absent.

"All of this is matter for genuine sorrow, for, if ever there was a young man with a great piano-talent, that young man is Ernest Hartman. Were he deeply musical he would in time eclipse the memory of his illustrious master, Rubinstein, and might even hope to gain for himself a place in the history of piano-playing beside the great Liszt. But we fear that he will never do it. He certainly will not unless something comes into his life which is not there now, something that will give him a perception of the psychological secrets of his art and a sympathy with its emotional force."

Baldwin paused. He allowed an impressive silence to intervene before speaking again.

"Well," he inquired, at length, "what do you think of that?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders. "Like the others, it says I play without feeling. That is nothing new."

"But this goes farther," pursued the manager, thoughtfully. "It suggests that if some deep emotional

experience were to come into your life——”

Hartman smiled. “You mean falling in love? That is all very well, but one cannot fall in love just because the critics advise it.”

“Not solely on that account, of course,” agreed Baldwin. “But what a queer fellow you are! To me, there’s something almost uncanny about a young man of twenty-two who has never been in love. Didn’t you ever even think you were?”

“Once, when I was twelve years old; but not since.”

“It beats me!” exclaimed the manager, in perplexity. “Surely some women attract you more than others?”

The young man’s face grew thoughtful. “I don’t know that I should put it in that way. Some are more interesting than others, but I don’t feel at ease with any of them. No woman I ever met interested me half as much as my chemical experiments——”

He stopped and looked gravely at his manager, who had burst into a roar of laughter.

“Excuse me, Ernest,” said the latter, when he had recovered himself; “I know you’re sensitive, but I can’t help it. To hear you talk solemnly about chemical experiments in that connection was too much for my gravity. I don’t think I was ever very romantic, even at your age, but compared with you I must have been a *Don Juan*. What I cannot understand is how, with your temperament, you ever came to choose music as a profession.”

“I didn’t choose it. They put me on a piano-stool before I could walk, and I’ve been there most of the time ever since. If you stick to one thing and do nothing else for twenty years or so, you can’t help learning something about it, whether you’re fit for it or not. And modern piano-playing is, after all, more motion than emotion.”

“Well,” observed the manager, at length, “yours is certainly an unusual case. But, after all, any fool can

fall in love. And it isn’t the *Romeos* that make the money!”

On the first morning out Baldwin went on deck after breakfast for a constitutional. Usually he was a poor sailor, but, the sea having been exceptionally calm thus far, he had not been affected, and felt rather proud of himself in consequence.

He had made several rapid turns of the deck when a feminine voice called his name. Baldwin stopped short and perceived a lady ensconced in a deck-chair. She had large, dark eyes and black hair, and was protected from the wind by a steamer rug whose dominant shade was a becoming red.

“Do you know that you have passed four times without seeing me?” she inquired, reproachfully. “I wonder if your health would suffer very much if you were to interrupt your walk for a few moments and apologize?”

She motioned him into an empty chair at her side.

“This is a surprise!” he exclaimed.

“I had no idea you were on board.”

“Then you didn’t read the passenger-list very carefully.”

“I can hardly realize it is you,” continued Baldwin. “Why, it must be five years since I saw you last.”

“Hush!” she said; “don’t speak of time in that reckless way. Tell me about yourself. I hear the world is treating you well nowadays.”

“Oh, I can’t complain.”

“You must find it a great relief to have only one artist to look after, instead of a whole comic-opera troupe.”

Baldwin smiled. “Of course it is less trouble—but the other had its compensations.”

“Do you remember the time the company was stranded at that place out West?”

“It was at Quincy, Illinois,” remarked Baldwin, reminiscently, “and Christmas week, too! I shall never forget the way we got back to Chicago. It was the only time I ever knew railroad people to act like human beings. But it would never

have happened then if you hadn't bewitched that old fellow. By Jove, what a stunning creature you were!"

"Were!" Her look of indignation was almost real. "Have I changed so much?"

"Not in appearance," he answered, deliberately studying her face. "In fact, you are more attractive than ever. Your beauty has ripened, if I may use the expression. But there is a change, though it's hard to explain. I think I'm a bit afraid of you now. I used not to be."

"Oh, I'm quite harmless, I assure you. But I really couldn't help growing a little older, you know. And it would never have done for me to remain always the guileless young thing I was in those days. But to return to your affairs, I hear you are to make a triumphant tour of the States. Mr. Hartman has never visited America before, has he?"

"No; this is his first trip."

"Tell me something about your protégé. Is he as impressionable as most musical celebrities, and does he give you much trouble with his love-affairs?"

"Not half trouble enough. That's the mischief of it. I'm afraid that if the musical critics in America take their cue from their brethren on the other side of the pond, our tour will be a fizzle. You know the critical verdict means much more in the United States than it does in Europe."

"I don't understand. What has all that to do with his love-affairs?"

"Just this—the English and Continental critics say that Hartman's playing lacks emotional force, and that before it can be really effective something will have to come into his life which is not there now—that he must fall in love and have his heart broken, or something of the kind."

"You don't mean to tell me that he has never been in love?"

"I am sure of it. What is more, I do not think he ever will be."

"How remarkable! You must introduce me to this unique example of

your sex. I have never met one like that. What does he look like?"

"Here he comes," said Baldwin, as a young man's head appeared at the companionway. "I will present him, and you can judge for yourself. Ernest!" he called, as the young man approached; "I want you to meet Miss Reeves, whose tour I had the honor of managing the last time I was in America. You are both musicians, and should know each other."

After a few platitudes *à trois*, the manager resumed his walk and left the two together.

That evening Baldwin again found himself alone with Miss Reeves.

"Well, what do you think of the invulnerable one?" he inquired.

"He is charming. For one thing, he doesn't seem quite at ease with a woman, which, in a young man nowadays, is refreshingly novel. Another interesting thing about him is the fact that he has great emotional possibilities. Oh, you needn't smile in that superior way. Let me tell you, my friend, that you are completely mistaken in your diagnosis."

"If you knew him as well as I do—" he began.

"Tut, tut! What does a man know about such matters! Any woman of average intelligence can find out more about a man's character and possibilities in two minutes than his best man friend will discover in a lifetime. Why, the boy is full of suppressed sentiment; in fact, I would almost say that he is one of the few who are capable of a *grande passion*. He gives me a delightful sense of being near a volcano. It is all dormant as yet, but one of these days he will meet the right woman—who, by the way, will probably be also the wrong woman—and then you will have trouble on your hands."

"I don't agree with you," said Baldwin. "Ernest is now twenty-two. Any young man who is normal falls in love and out again at least seventeen times before reaching that age."

"I did not say he is normal. No man can be who passes his life glued



to a piano-stool. He is not normal, and he has never met a woman who understood his peculiar temperament—or who could make him think she did, which is almost the same thing.”

“How well you appear to understand him!” exclaimed Baldwin. “You convince me in spite of myself. I didn’t think he had an atom of sentiment in his composition.”

He paused, reflectively. “Helen,” he exclaimed, “why don’t you”—he hesitated—“why don’t you take him in hand?”

She smiled, comprehendingly.

“It would be interesting,” she said, thoughtfully. “Playing with fire has always had a fascination for me, especially when the fire is one that smolders. And he’s really quite handsome, though not as tall as I like a man to be. But I am afraid he would take things too seriously. He is not the kind of fellow that would fall in love comfortably—and I should not like to make him suffer, you know.”

“That is just what he requires,” said the manager, brutally. “The whole trouble with him is that he has never learned to feel, and that is something which, in popular language, he needs in his business. The critics say it is the one thing he lacks to make his playing perfect. Just think of how much you would be doing for the cause of art!”

She laughed. “Even if I tried, I am not at all sure that I could succeed; but I will think it over.”

“Do you know,” said Miss Reeves, with reproach in her voice, “that it really looked as if you were trying to avoid me yesterday?”

“You are right,” answered Hartman, gravely; “that is just what I was doing.”

She smiled at the unexpected ingenuousness of the reply, then assumed a look of wounded pride.

“What have I done to offend you?” she demanded.

“Oh, nothing, of course; that was not the reason.”

“What, then?”

He hesitated. “It is hard to explain. I had a strange feeling about you. I felt that it would not do for me to see too much of you.”

He stopped in some confusion.

“This is getting interesting. Please go on. Why would it not do?”

“Because—because I have never met a woman like you before. You have a disquieting effect upon me. I think you would unsettle my mind and take my thoughts from my work. That is something I wish to guard against. I have never had a woman’s influence in my life, and I do not wish to begin now.”

She smiled again. There was something essentially boyish in his declaration of independence.

After a prolonged pause, she spoke. “You have been frank, and I will be frank, too. Do you know what is happening to you? You have been asleep all your life, and are just awakening. It is not I who have a disquieting effect upon you; it is the emotional part of your nature beginning to assert itself for the first time. And do you actually think this will hurt your music? Really, you are a very short-sighted young man. Why, you ought to go down on your knees and thank heaven that you are at last about to emerge from your cocoon! Now, if you will help me out of this chair, I shall go below to my room and leave you to think it over.”

“Please don’t go!” he pleaded. “I wish to talk to you.”

“But I might unsettle your mind.”

“I don’t care, now, if you do,” he answered, recklessly. “In fact, I am beginning to think I should rather like it.”

She looked at him through half-closed eyes.

“I think,” she remarked, “that you are getting on nicely.”

On Friday evening the usual concert was given for the benefit of the Seamen’s Orphanage. The saloon was filled with passengers, eager, as passengers generally are, for anything in the shape of diversion.

Helen Reeves sat between Hartman and his manager, and commented freely on the items of the programme.

There were the inevitable preliminary remarks by an energetic person who had constituted himself advance-agent and stage-manager of the performance. Then came, in somewhat faltering succession, a melodramatic recitation by a young woman trembling all over from stage-fright, and some moth-eaten humorous stories by a raw-boned English clergyman with a shiny nose.

"Will somebody please inform me," whispered Miss Reeves, as the ecclesiastic resumed his seat amid a ripple of perfunctory laughter, "why clergymen insist upon trying to tell funny stories? Why do they wish to be humorists?"

"For the same reason, doubtless, that low comedians yearn to play *Hamlet*," suggested Baldwin.

"It's all very mysterious," observed Miss Reeves; "but what have we here?" A lady had seated herself at the piano in the self-immolating manner of the accompanist, and a bald-headed little man arose with a sheet of music in his hand. "I didn't know Mr. Weldon could sing."

"He can't!" said Baldwin, decisively. "I heard him at rehearsal this afternoon, and it sounded like a broken phonograph."

Miss Reeves laughed. "You are quite witty this evening. But what makes Mr. Hartman so subdued? He has scarcely spoken, and he looks worried. Surely he does not suffer from stage-fright?"

"Not as a rule," said Hartman, gravely, "but I do feel a little nervous to-night. Perhaps," he added, in a lower tone, "it is at the idea of playing before you."

"That should inspire you," she returned, smiling. "Remember, I expect a great deal of you, and I am very curious to see how you behave at the piano. Have you many mannerisms?"

Hartman laughed. "The critics accuse me of not having enough. They complain that I am stolid."

"That is much better than going to the other extreme. I should not like to see you smirk and make faces at us, as so many others do."

When his name had been announced with a rhetorical flourish by the chairman, Hartman picked his way through the audience and seated himself at the keyboard. Simply, and without any of the invocatory chords or arpeggios in which our modern virtuosi indulge, he began to play.

It was Chopin's study in C sharp minor, known as the "cello" study, that enigmatical composition whose meaning has puzzled the musical analysts. Demanding no unusual technical skill or brilliancy of execution, it is in no sense of the word a "show piece." Moreover, it was familiar to the majority of those who listened, for, alas! like almost everything that Chopin wrote, it has fallen a victim to the school-girl and is vivisected daily in a million back-parlors.

But, as Hartman played, the study acquired a new significance, apparent even to the prosaic Baldwin. "Gad!" muttered the latter under his breath, "something has happened to him! He isn't the same at all!"

Baldwin was right. Hartman was changed. His old manner of appearing to toy with the resources of a boundless technique had vanished. In its stead was something new to him, something infinitely tender and moving. The haunting melody of the left hand was no longer a clever imitation of the violoncello, nor merely a demonstration of exquisite tonal effects. It was the voice of a human soul in the stress of a mighty passion, torn by alternate hopes and fears, crying out in rebellion at fate and finally beating its wings against the bars of unutterable despair.

When the closing passage had melted away into the softest of pianissimo, there was an interval of silence. Then the applause rang out in a frenzy of enthusiasm. Hartman sat motionless, his hands on his knees. He appeared to have forgotten his surroundings. Presently he turned his

head and his eyes met those of some one in the audience. It seemed to bring him to a realization of where he was. Bowing to the repeated salvos, but refusing to respond to the demand for an encore, he returned to his seat.

As he did so, he was struck by Miss Reeves's appearance. Her face was flushed, her eyes, unusually bright, glistened as if she were about to cry.

"Please take me out of this," she murmured; "I—I want a little air."

Without speaking, he escorted her from the saloon and up the companion-way. The promenade deck was quite deserted; presumably, everybody was below. For a few moments the pair stood by the rail in silence, watching the sea as it rocked in the moonlight. Suddenly, she turned toward him and grasped both his hands in hers.

"It was wonderful," she exclaimed, "wonderful! I never knew the piano could express so much."

"Nor did I," he said, "until you taught me."

"Until I taught you?"

"Yes, you." His voice was very tender as he uttered the words. "I don't know how to put it into words, but I must tell you. It is such a short time that I have known you—only a few days—yet you have changed my whole existence. Everything is different. Do you remember telling me that I had been asleep all my life and was just about to awaken? Now I know how true that was. I am like one born blind, who suddenly gains his sight. The whole world seems new to me; I am beginning to discover how much beauty there is in it. The blue sky and the clouds and the sunset, the waves of the sea, they all speak to me now, where before they were dumb. And my music! Ah, how can I begin to tell you how much more that means to me—since I learned to love you!"

She turned her face toward his. Her eyes still shone, but a look of pleasant excitement had replaced the tears, and there was complete self-possession in her smile.

"Do you really love me?" she asked.

"More than my life!" he answered, passionately. "Tell me if I may hope."

"You take my breath away," she said. "Who would have thought you had so much emotion! It is you quiet men——"

"Don't torture me with suspense," he pleaded. "Give me an answer; tell me if you care for me."

"What is a woman to do," she demanded, "with a young man so impatient? I think you are most unfair to tell me this at a time when your music has left me in an emotional and irresponsible mood. You are taking me at a disadvantage—and a woman never likes to be taken at a disadvantage. Do you know that I ought to be very angry with you?"

But she smiled as she said it, and her face was dangerously close to his. She made the faintest show of resistance when he took her in his arms and kissed her reverently on the lips.

Hartman passed the next day in a curious mental state. He kept telling himself that he ought to be supremely happy. Happy he was in a certain feverish way, but with an undercurrent of uneasiness, of vague disquietude. What had happened the night before seemed like a part of a dream. There was a mistiness, an air of unreality about it all, that made the retrospect appear a whim of his imagination. Miss Reeves he saw not at all during the day. Her maid reported that she was confined to her room with a headache.

Shortly after daybreak the following morning, the steamer reached quarantine. Much virtuous early-rising ensued, with the usual bustle and excitement of preparing to disembark. Passengers appeared who had not been seen at table since the day of sailing. There was profuse admiration for the sunrise and much patriotic enthusiasm at the sight of Staten Island.

Miss Reeves did not emerge from her stateroom until the vessel was swinging into dock in the North

River. She greeted Hartman somewhat formally and busied herself in giving directions about her packages to a steward.

As the steamer was being manoeuvred into place, Hartman stood by her side. The usual crowd of welcoming friends were waving hats, umbrellas and handkerchiefs, and shouting salutations.

"Why have you kept away from me?" asked Hartman, in a low voice. "If you knew——"

He stopped short. She was smiling and waving her handkerchief at some one on the dock. Following her glance, Hartman saw a portly man with iron-gray hair. The man kissed his hand and called out something that was lost in the general din.

"Is that your father?" inquired Hartman.

"My father? How absurd! It is Mr. De Wolfe, my husband. Gracious, don't look at me in that tragic way. He is very jealous and will be wondering."

"Your husband!" gasped Hartman. "I—I don't understand. I thought you were Miss——"

"Oh, I always travel under my professional name; it's more convenient. My dear boy," she added, in a kinder tone, "I didn't mean to hurt you, but you mustn't take things so seriously. Everybody flirts a little on board a ship. One has to do something to pass the time."

On the evening announced for Hartman's first appearance in America, Carnegie Hall was crowded with that section of the New York public which is always ready to greet a musical artist with a European reputation and a competent press-agent.

At half-past eight, fifteen minutes

after the time set for the first number, the audience began to show signs of impatience. At a quarter to nine the impatience was general and emphatic. At five minutes after nine a man appeared on the platform and stated, somewhat nervously, that Mr. Hartman had been taken suddenly ill and could not appear; money would be refunded at the box-office.

The audience departed, some grumbling, some sympathetic, the majority with the philosophic good humor of an American gathering.

At breakfast next morning Mr. De Wolfe looked up from his *Herald* with a sudden exclamation. "Here's something about that piano-playing fizzle," he remarked to his wife. "No wonder we didn't hear any music last night!"

"What was the matter?"

"It seems," returned Mr. De Wolfe, deliberately, "that just before the hour fixed for his appearance the manager found the musician at their hotel—with a bullet through his head. The young fool had killed himself."

Helen De Wolfe turned white. "Killed himself!" she repeated. "Oh, it's too horrible! It can't be true!"

"Of course," added Mr. De Wolfe, contemptuously, "there was a woman in the case. The paper suggests that it was one who came over on the same steamer and made a fool of him." He eyed his wife in sudden suspicion. "Did you—did you see anything of the kind going on?"

She returned his gaze with eyes that did not falter. "No, indeed! the poor boy was so shy, he seemed almost afraid to speak to us."

There was a pause.

"I wonder," she said, musingly, "who the woman could have been?"



## WORSE STILL

THE BACHELOR—Have you ever walked in your sleep?

THE BENEDICK—No, but I've often walked in the baby's sleep.

## IN AN OLD ROSE GARDEN

IN leafy setting of the purest green  
 Here grow my roses, sparkling with the sheen  
 Of early dew upon each petal fair,  
 And here and there the sunshine in between.

Bashful and coy, and seeking, in the shade,  
 The amorous sun's first kisses to evade,  
 A group of yellow buds their leaves unfold,  
 Like the bright golden hair of some young maid.

Love-scented, sweet, and sensuous with the taste  
 Of Summer slumber, saffron-hued, and graced  
 With dainty petal, perfect to the core,  
 Blooms Dijon's Glory, undefiled and chaste.

Here some gay beauty in a robe of gold  
 In solemn state her regal court doth hold,  
 Full-blown and wanton, with prolific waste  
 Shedding her petals, like a tale that's told.

See, where the wall is green with moss grown o'er,  
 Through the half-hidden, time-discolored door,  
 A tender wild rose timidly has crept,  
 And makes the garden sweeter than before.

Here boughs of budding briar interlace,  
 Crowding the crumbling lichen-covered space;  
 Sweetness is all around; but, all too soon,  
 Withers like morning mist, and leaves no trace.

Here, where the roses blush a deeper red,  
 The crimson petals all around are shed;  
 Their life is short, though sweet, like some fair face  
 That laughs for love in life, and smiles when dead.

Make ye the most of Summer, ye whose noon  
 Lasts but the waning of a single moon;  
 Guard well your life of gaily passing hours  
 That springs to life in May, and dies in June!

ST. JOHN HAMUND.



HYPOCRISY is moral versatility.



# A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT

By Robert Bloom

LOVE went hard with Walters. It proved fatal. He married the girl he was to love throughout eternity, and found that eternity is not eternal. He could see the end plainly, and he did not like it. Walters was fond of his sensations, and he had a way of getting them in print that was paying.

He had been in love many times, professionally, just to see how it went and to make a good story of it. He had never meant to allow it to become real, but somehow Alice Graham got the better of him—and then she got the worst.

He wrote such beautiful sonnets and rondeaus about her blue eyes and golden hair, while Love was still in swaddling-clothes. Now, the swaddling-clothes in Walters's house were no longer metaphorical, and there was no time for inspiration. Besides, the light of heaven in the blue eyes was becoming dimmed by shadows of earth, and the golden hair in curl-papers did not fill the poet's heart with ecstatic imaginings of beauty's immortality.

After the first appearance of the curl-papers at breakfast, he had thoughts of writing something called "The Revelations of Beauty;" but he was not naturally satirical and proceeded no further than the title.

At last Walters saw that life is not all poetry, and he decided to drop to prose. The fall was great, and he had a hard bump; but it opened his eyes to what life really is.

It happened in this way: Walters decided to write a novel. Being fresh at the work, he thought he must know

what he was writing about. He must feel things, not imagine them. He would write a story of domestic love and happiness—one of those things that charm the world by their simplicity and faithful portrayal of everyday life.

But to do this he must re-fall in love with his wife and live over the first days of their marriage. His memory was not good enough to make the picture life-size, without bringing it nearer. The background of golden hopes and brilliant promises was somewhat faded, but with a little touching up it would do.

The main figures—the bright, young wife and the adoring husband—presented difficulties. Walters thought he saw a way of bringing it all back. He remembered that he began to love Alice Graham when that other man was so devoted to her. He had been madly jealous, and after that had come the catastrophe.

A jealous husband would add spice to his novel, and then there would be such a happy reconciliation after the explanation!

The success of his novel demanded a rival for his wife's affection. The mere thought of it made the perfunctory kiss before dinner seem rather pleasanter than usual. He wavered, but his feelings were not at the proper pitch to satisfy the reading public.

Their table-talk that evening was almost lively. Walters dragged his man into the conversation.

"I have been thinking of asking Tom Hallet to come down for a week or so. You remember him, don't you?"

Her face lighted up, as she said she

recalled him well. She was picturing to herself the handsome, clever man she had given up for Robert Walters. She looked across the table, and vaguely wondered why.

"I expect to be busy," Walters went on, uneasily, "and you will have to see that Hallet has a good time."

Alice looked surprised, but she knew better than to ask him why he invited people when he could not entertain them. She began, unconsciously, to play her part.

"I am so glad my new riding-habit looks well," she said. "I know Mr. Hallet likes to ride, and I can show him the country around here."

Walters disappeared to write his invitation, but he could not make it sound cordial.

He remembered now that Alice did look well in her riding-habit. He had not thought of it before.

Hallet came, and, so far as feelings went, Walters thought his novel would be a success. But he could not get down to writing. His story of domestic love and happiness was becoming impossible.

Alice was certainly following his instructions. She was seeing that his guest had a good time.

Hallet had such a delightful visit that the week he was to stay lengthened indefinitely. Walters shut himself up in his study; then he came out and walked miles. Alice made excuses for him to Hallet on the plea of work, and devoted herself to entertaining the guest.

Walters watched them start off on their horses each morning, and ground his teeth. Alice was really remarkably good-looking—she was prettier than ever before, but she was overdoing things.

She need not smile that way at the big, handsome man at her side. She might have the grace to look a little bored while performing the duties of hostess.

Then Walters thought of his book. "Remember the explanation and reconciliation," he said to himself. "This is really just what I wanted, but I don't seem to enjoy it. That book will be wonderful."

One morning Alice and the handsome man rode away.

Walters found a note on his desk, and that was all the literature that ever appeared on the subject.

He discovered that men do not write their own tragedies.



## INSTINCT TO CONSCIENCE

YOU, in an accidental Aryan shape,  
With Roman training, prove a modern thing;  
I, who derive from savage and from ape,  
Tread on your reasoning!

You speak of necessary laws, the same  
In every clime and age, laws bad or good;  
I put your modern sophistries to shame  
With elemental blood.

VICTOR PLARR.



## RATHER!

"IS her husband well off?"

"I should think he is. He has more money than *she* knows what to do with."

# A LUSTRUM OF FIDELITY

By Edith Bigelow

"I am resolved to . . . look young till forty, and then slip out of the world with the first wrinkle, and the reputation of five-and-twenty."

"**I** FEEL disgracefully young to-night," said Mrs. Mainwaring. "You look young," answered Miles Luttrell.

"Ah, pink shades! When men tell you that you look young, it's one of the sure signs that you're nearly forty."

"What are the other signs?"

"Nice boys ask you out to dine! And that is so pleasant that you don't mind being old."

The "nice boy" looked across the small table with a brilliant, happy smile. He was at the stage when the lightest word from the beloved woman held him captive; when, indeed, her mere silence enchained him.

"I'm not a boy, you know," he said. "You forget that I'm thirty."

"I wish I could forget it," said Ruby Mainwaring. Her face had changed, and the corners of her mouth drooped.

"Why do you say that?" asked Luttrell, almost coaxingly. He leaned across the narrow space between them and rested his eyes full upon her face.

"Never mind; don't let us analyze. If most of the people are gone, give me a cigarette."

The pair were practically alone in the farthest corner of a three-room-deep restaurant in Soho.

Luttrell looked about. "We own the place," said he, and gave his companion a cigarette. She smiled her thanks, and lighted it at the flame of the wax match, which he extended to her. She was never tired of watching

her "nice boy." Every movement of his was graceful and interesting—to her.

"I like to see you smoke," said Luttrell; "you have always the air of doing something naughty, out of sheer bravado. You don't care for it much."

"It's companionable. I forget to do it when you're not with me," said Ruby Mainwaring. "Are we going anywhere to-night, Miles?"

"Do you wish to go anywhere, Ruby?"

"Home, I think," she answered.

"Yes, that's the most comfortable place I know," assented the young man.

They finished their cigarettes in silence.

"Are you ready?" asked Luttrell.

"Quite," said Mrs. Mainwaring.

In the hansom they were unusually quiet. Mrs. Mainwaring looked over the fur and lace of her high cloak collar at the boy's clean profile, and tried to keep the love out of her eyes. Presently, he gently possessed himself of her hand, and held it tightly until they reached Mrs. Mainwaring's house. They went up into the softly-lighted drawing-room. He helped her to lay aside her cloak, and she stood once more revealed in all her charm and prettiness. She was restless, and, instead of sitting down, stood before the fire.

Miles moved near her and lighted a fresh cigarette. Suddenly, he turned and said, with a vehemence in surprising contrast with his former calm silence:

"It's no use, Ruby; this can't go on. I can't live without you."

Instantly, her sensitive, ever-vary-

ing face was aflame; but she controlled herself.

"You don't live without me, dear," she said, and her voice trembled.

"Oh, I know," he answered. "We are friends, companions—all that! I'm your 'dear boy,' and you're 'very fond' of me. But it's nonsense. I'm a man, and I love you; and you've got to marry me."

Ruby gasped. "Oh, Miles!" she cried.

"I'm not good enough for you; I haven't much to offer you, but you're kind, you like me—try to love me! I won't live without you."

In an instant he had her in his arms, and her life was transfigured. Then she became coldly, tragically sane. She disengaged herself almost roughly from his embrace.

"I am forty," she said.

"I know it," said Miles.

"I will never marry you."

"Then you don't love me."

"I won't marry you—*because* I love you."

Luttrell's face was white and his eyes blazed. His was the quiet of the sleeping volcano. "Sit down," he said, "and let us talk sense." Then, being a man, he went on smoking.

To some women the scent of a cigarette must always recall the most wonderful experience of their lives, because some of the dearest of men bridge over a crisis by smoking.

Luttrell looked at Ruby for a minute in silence. There was something pathetic about her: her beauty, hardly yet touched by the early frost; her gentle air of having tried against heavy odds to be happy, and of having only partially succeeded; and the wholly touching expression which seemed to say, "Love me! I am worth it, and yet I have had so little love!"

As Luttrell looked at her, he appeared to be ten years her senior. "Now, my child," he said, gently, "give me your reasons—your foolish, foolish reasons."

"There is only one thing that keeps us apart—my age," she said.

"In all the happiest marriages—" began Miles.

"Yes, I know," she answered. "I've been trying to think that, but it isn't true." Then she broke out vehemently: "Oh, Miles, think of the agony! Think of the constant daily effort to keep young! Why, the very wear and tear of that would make a woman old! Think of going down to breakfast and feeling that a man was noticing, in spite of himself, how faded, how plain, his wife was growing!"

Miles had stopped smoking. He took her hand. "You talk," he said, "as if I loved only your body, Ruby."

"Oh, I know, you care for the real me; but my body is all you can see, and *that* is forty years old!"

"What is it you're afraid of?" he asked, presently; "that I'll stop loving you?"

"Of that—of everything! I haven't the courage! What would people say?"

Luttrell's face hardened a little.

"Do you care for that?" he asked.

"Yes; I can't help it; and so would you, in time. Think of always having to *explain* your wife! It would wear you out."

He was silent for a moment; he had dropped her hand. "Ruby," he said, "you have never told me whether you loved me."

Her whole form seemed to glow and expand. She leaned toward him with a sort of celestial radiance resting upon her.

"Whether I love you!" she said.

"Well, you have at least a right to know that! Does a prisoner love the sunlight when he feels it once more upon him? Why, you're the only man on earth who ever brought happiness into my life! You have healed all my wounds, cured all my pain. I love you from your beautiful head to your beautiful feet; the touch of your hand makes my heaven. And more than that, I love your heart, your nature, your truth, your courage and your tenderness. If to-morrow you lost everything that could make other women love you—if you were only a

poor, suffering wreck, broken in fortune and even in reputation—I would take you and cherish you and tend you for the rest of your life!”

Luttrell covered his face with his hands. “Ah,” he said, brokenly, “that is love! What have I done to deserve it?” And then he folded her once more against his heart. This time she was unresisting.

For a few moments she rested quietly, lulled by a sense of blessedness, by the awful joy that comes to a woman with the knowledge that she is really loved. After a time she raised her face. It was pale and serious; the bright look had faded, and she had undergone one of the sudden transitions that made her charm so varying.

“Miles,” she said, “I should not be afraid, if I could be sure of one thing.”

“What is that, dear?” Luttrell asked.

“If I could die in five years.”

“Why do you say that?”

“I think a man who really loves a woman might love her for five years.”

He smiled a little. “I think it has been done.”

“Don’t smile; I am serious. It is a long time to be in love. Few men and women really love each other so long.”

“I shall love you always.”

“Don’t tempt fate! There is no such thing as ‘always’—especially in love.”

“Your troubles have made you distrustful. Because one man has been cruelly unworthy of you, why should all your faith be destroyed?”

“It isn’t that. It is what I see, what I observe. I have watched these unequal marriages.”

“And many of them are successful. Remember the Northbrooks.”

“Yes; he died in three years.”

“Young Harries, then; he married a woman fifteen years older than himself, and she was no beauty, either.”

“Long ago he reached the stage when he became kind to her! Oh, Miles, if you were ever kind to me, I should creep away and die!”

The expression in her eyes went to her lover’s heart.

“How blind you are, my darling!” he said, and his voice shook. “When I become kind to you—merely kind—it will be I who deserve to die.”

“Don’t you see that it is almost more than I can believe in—this happiness? It is like the dream of a starving man. What if I wake, and find that I am hungry still? You ought not to love me, you know. You’re a fine, handsome young creature, with the world before you, while I——”

“While you are a haggard, ugly, stupid old woman, you’re going to say?” He was laughing now. “Why don’t you see yourself as you are?” he went on; “a woman who combines in herself the charms of all ages. I can’t say to you all I think; I’m not good at phrase-making; I only know that you are the one woman on earth that I wish, now and as long as I live.”

“How happy we’ve been these last months!” Ruby sighed.

“It has been heaven to me,” said Luttrell, gravely.

“Why tempt fate, Miles? It is not too late; let us stay as we are.”

Miles appeared unmoved. He had not too high an opinion of himself, but he knew his power. He observed Ruby silently, with something like amusement in his eyes. Before his look her own eyes fell.

“I know it’s impossible,” she said, nervously; “but, oh, I do want to be fair to you, my own little boy! I mustn’t be a millstone around your neck!”

“Come around my neck, dear!” he said. “Never mind what you call yourself.”

## II

THE bride and groom were of sufficient social importance to escape open adverse criticism. There was something about their obvious happiness that disarmed ridicule. People who had known Ruby in the days of her misery, before Death’s scythe had cut the knot which was throttling her, were glad to see her face so radiant. At last happiness had come her way, and nobody grudged it to her. She



was a woman who never made an enemy; she was not brilliant enough to be caustic, nor rich nor beautiful enough to be envied; and it is chiefly a sharp tongue or a large fortune which excites the enmity of one's fellow-men.

Luttrell, with his clean, manly beauty and his straight reputation, was deservedly popular. Perhaps one or two maidens heaved a fluttering sigh to see a man so desirable carried off by a middle-aged woman; but the most disappointed had no legitimate grounds for pitying him. He wore the proud and satisfied look of the man who has gained that for which he has striven, and that is the most becoming expression known to the human countenance. Ruby had cast off ten years of her age. Every one admits that love is, among other things, a fine cosmetic.

On the day when Miles and Ruby walked down the aisle, safely married, it did not occur to any one in the audience to observe the disparity in the dates of their births. It was only after they had disappeared that some one murmured: "How young she looks! and he is quite settled."

Then began a period of time too beautiful to be written about. Let any one who wishes to picture it, imagine the feelings of a woman who has been crushed, bruised, neglected and insulted by one man, and who suddenly finds herself cherished, appreciated and adored by another. Very few people know anything experimentally about a real marriage, but nearly everybody with a soul above that of a caterpillar has had mental glimpses of what it might be. Such a marriage Miles and Ruby had made. Theirs was the perfect union of the physical and the intellectual. Mind and body were satisfied. Every day was golden to this man and this woman, because every day found them together. Their love did not spoil their wholesome interest in the outer world; it was rather the glowing background of life which beautified the most insignificant objects.

For five years their sky was without a cloud. People smiled, and said: "Five years is a long time to be in love with one's own wife." But it had not seemed a long time to the Luttrells. That evening in the restaurant—the evening which had decided their fate—seemed like yesterday.

On the fifth anniversary they went there again to dine. The pink candle-shades seemed identical with those which long ago must have succumbed to London dirt. Even the waiters looked familiar; and the chef, if not the same as formerly, was evidently the equal of his predecessor.

Ruby wore a black gown which displayed her still lovely arms and shoulders. Miles had grown a little heavier and was handsomer than in his over-thin boyhood. He was in the full glory of five-and-thirty, the age at which a man should be looking and doing his best. His eyes had not the eager, restless light which had been in them five years ago, for a man cannot be always searching for what he has long ago found. His face wore the contented expression of a person who, having desired certain things, has obtained them and is satisfied, not satiated. He was the picture of a happy, prosperous man, but he was still interesting—a difficult quality to preserve amidst too much happiness and prosperity.

Ruby, at forty-five, was still exceedingly attractive; but she was frankly middle-aged. She had learned to conceal her throat—where age first grips women—with velvet or a diamond collar. She was exquisitely groomed. She wore her own hair, undyed, just showing a streak of silver here and there, and had taken sedulous care of a once lovely complexion. Indeed, she looked ten years younger than she could have done by means of massage minus happiness. She had had five years of peace of mind, the absence of which lays women low with the fashionable nervous prostration. Since the first few weeks, when she had trembled at her blessings, she had held fast to the belief in the absolute reality

of Miles's love. The women who wonder all day long whether they are actually beloved are the first to be trodden on by Time; and, unfortunately, Time's feet are crows' feet.

The room was tolerably full. Miles sat facing it, while Ruby's back was turned to the diners.

About the middle of the dinner, Miles observed: "There is the prettiest girl you ever saw, at that table."

"I can't see," said his wife, tranquilly, "without turning round."

"Wait till we go out," said Miles.

He looked often in the direction of the girl. Presently he exclaimed, softly, so that she might not hear him: "She is the incarnation of youth and Spring."

"How poetical!" said Ruby, smiling; but she winced.

As they were leaving, she glanced at the young girl, who was really exquisite; tall and slim, but rounded, and very fair. Throat and cheeks were molded with at once a softness and a firmness, like marble made flesh. The bloomy freshness of April seemed to breathe from herself and her garments.

"Isn't she lovely?" asked Miles, as he and his wife drove away. He had caught the eyes of the fair unknown, and they were as blue as a southern sea.

"Beautiful!" said Ruby. "I wonder who she is?"

They were soon to know, for within a week they met her. She was called Lilius Dale and was an American girl, lately arrived to spend the season in London. They saw her constantly, for she knew most of the people in their set.

From the first, Luttrell was frankly charmed with her. Dinners, dances, Ranelagh and Hurlingham brought them together. Ruby, unfortunately, was not very well that Summer, and did not always feel able to keep her numerous engagements. She would not hear of allowing Miles to stay at home with her. Her "boy," as she still called him, must not forego all his Summer pleasures for the sake of

a "tiresome old woman." When she said "old woman," Miles kissed her with all his usual fervor, and told her that pleasure lost its charm when she was absent; but he went, nevertheless.

Ruby triumphed over ill-health, and presently took her place in the festive entertainments proper to the season. She cultivated the acquaintance of Lilius Dale. She studied her, unblinded by her beauty, and came to the conclusion that the girl was as lovely in character as in face and figure. Lilius and Miles were a splendid couple. Ruby would have enjoyed looking at them, if she had not been very human, and the wife of Miles. They took the most transparent delight in each other's society.

One day Ruby overheard a friend of hers say to some one: "I feel rather sorry for those two," indicating Lilius and Miles; "they don't know yet how much they care for each other." "They will find out," was the reply.

Ruby went home and looked at herself in the glass. The light was brutally truthful. It had no reticence. She bared her throat, she looked at herself in mirrors cunningly adjusted to reveal every line. A great pang shot through her. She was an old woman! "Mature," a flatterer would have called her; "old," she called herself. She had never played with facts—she had had need to face them. Fifteen years spent with a man who had broken her down, body and soul, had aged her before her time.

The Indian Summer of Miles's love was the mellow prelude to the inevitable frost. Now, Winter was here. She steeled herself in anticipation of the time, surely not far distant, when Miles should become "kind." She recalled some lines by Stephen Phillips:

Thou would'st grow kind,  
Most bitter to a woman who was loved.  
I must ensnare thee to my arms and touch  
Thy pity, but to hold thee to my heart.

Ensnare him? Never! There was only one dignified course for a woman who had been supplanted. Ruby re-

membered a dictum of a wise friend of hers: "When you begin to feel the necessity for holding a man, spare yourself the pains; he is already gone."

Ruby quietly took up her life after the terrible hour with the looking-glass.

Miles seemed ill and worn. He did not sleep well. His wife heard him sometimes pacing the floor of his room.

Lilias, too, was changed. She seemed to avoid Ruby, though the elder woman was as friendly as ever and sought her society. Lilias and Luttrell seldom looked at each other now.

One day they were all talking of separating for the Summer. The Dales were going to the Continent, the Luttrells to their country house, and later to Scotland. Presently, Ruby left her husband and Lilias alone. She was sorry for them; she realized that Miles was a man so loyal that he could never confess, even to himself, that he loved any woman but his wife. After all, she reflected, a man could make vows, but he could not be sure of keeping them; and love was perhaps a transient passion, which at best must survive as a crystallized habit of affection. She viewed the situation with a strange, calm detachment. Poor children! She felt like a pitying mother toward them.

After half an hour, she went back very quietly—for the first and last time an eavesdropper, one with an honorable motive—and drew aside the portière.

Miles and Lilias stood facing each other, with their hands clasped.

Ruby was right; he had not spoken. Both faces were white, and their eyes exchanged the secret held in keeping by the tight-closed lips.

Ruby stole away. She knew what she wished to know, and her course was plain.

That evening the Luttrells spent at home. Miles was frankly ill and out of spirits. Ruby sat beside him, holding his hand—the hand "whose touch was heaven," as she had once told him—stroking his wavy hair, where there was no tinge of gray.

She felt already so far on the journey she meant to make that the world of passion had receded, leaving only the quiet atmosphere of kindness and affection, the warmth of love without its turbulence.

"Dear," she said, "I have been happy for five years."

He looked at her with a far-away expression. "Have I kept my promise?" he asked.

"To the utmost."

Then, after a little: "And now I am an old woman."

"Never to me," he said.

He took her face and turned it toward him. All her love for her handsome "boy" flooded her eyes. She kissed his lips once. She could not trust herself to do more; perhaps that warm contact might hold her back from the journey she had pledged herself to take.

"My boy, my boy!" she cried; "no man ever made a woman so happy. I bless and thank you for it! And now I am tired and will sleep."

In the morning she was still sleeping.



## FORGIVING AND FORGETTING

FORGIVING and forgetting might  
Be practised oft in debt,  
Were lenders willing to forgive  
As borrowers to forget.

S. W. GILLILAN.

# THE CRIMINAL

By Arthur Macy

CRIME flourishes throughout the land,  
And bids defiance to the law,  
And wicked deeds on every hand  
O'erwhelm our souls with awe!

I know one hardened criminal  
Whose maidenhood with crime begins;  
Who, safe behind a prison wall,  
Should expiate her sins.

She is a thief whene'er she smiles,  
For then she steals my heart from me,  
And keeps it with a maiden's wiles,  
And never sets it free.

She plunders sighs from humankind,  
She pilfers tears I would not weep,  
She robs me of my peace of mind,  
And she purloins my sleep.

Of lawless ways she stands confessed,  
And is a burglar bold whene'er  
She finds a weakness in my breast,  
And slyly enters there.

A gambler she, whose arts entrance,  
Whose victims yield without demur;  
Content to play Love's game of chance  
And lose their hearts to her.

A graver crime is hers; for, when  
Her matchless beauty I admire,  
Of arson she is guilty then,  
And sets my heart on fire.

A bandit, preying on mankind,  
Her captives by the score increase;  
No hand can e'er their chains unbind,  
No ransom bring release.

She is a cruel murderess  
Whene'er her eyes send forth a dart,  
And as she holds me in duress  
It stabs me to the heart.

Crime flourishes throughout the land,  
And bids defiance to the law,  
And wicked deeds on every hand  
O'erwhelm our souls with awe!



## SEEING THE PICTURES

MRS. DEVOE (*whispering*)—Don't stand in front of the other people, Georgie; it's very rude.

GEORGIE (*aged ten*)—Well, what makes them stand so far away from the pictures? I can't see through *them*!

MRS. DEVOE—S-sh! See the pretty sheep in the snow-storm.

GEORGIE (*critically*)—Huh! who ever heard of sheep being left out in a blizzard like that? They'd die. What's the matter with the man? Why doesn't he put them in the stable?

MRS. DEVOE (*speciously*)—I suppose he's overcome with the cold. Take your hands out of your pockets, dear. (*Gives him catalogue.*) Here, hold the book.

GEORGIE (*consulting the catalogue*)—"1750: Moonlight." What's "1750?" the price?

MRS. DEVOE (*absently*)—No, dear; that's the year—moonlight in 1750. See the fruit piece!

GEORGIE (*reflectively*)—I couldn't let the fruit stay there long enough to paint it; could you, mother? And look at the glass full of wine! Wine wouldn't be long in a glass at *our* house. Why didn't the artist drink it?

MRS. DEVOE—Probably he didn't drink.

GEORGIE—That's funny! Maybe the wine was poor. It must be that, because the label's turned away. (*Referring to another canvas.*) "Sunset at the Brook." See the cows drinking. And, my! what a red-hot sunset! I'll bet if a bull was there he'd chase it. (*A moment later.*) Say, mother, why are all those people sitting down around the centre of the next room? Are they tired?

MRS. DEVOE—There are so many large paintings in there, dear; it's quite proper to look at large pictures from a distance.

GEORGIE (*still curious*)—And why have they steam heat right against the backs of the seats?

MRS. DEVOE (*still patient*)—To keep the people from sitting there too long, dear.

GEORGIE—They ought to have a policeman to keep them moving on.

MRS. DEVOE—What a bright, happy face that newsboy has!

GEORGIE (*derisively*)—Huh! you never saw a newsboy with such a clean face in your life! I'm tired; let's go home.

MRS. DEVOE—Not yet, dear; it wouldn't look well; we've been here only fifteen minutes.

GEORGIE (*impatiently*)—Why do we have to pay to come in here, anyway? Who gets the money?

MRS. DEVOE—It's divided among the artists. We'll go into the next room now.

GEORGIE (*suddenly discovering Indian study at the further end of gallery, enthusiastically*)—Look, mother, look! Injuns! Come on! (*Temporary separation of mother and son.*)

ROY MELBOURNE CHALMERS.



# LA NOBLESSE FRANÇAISE

Par le Marquis de Castellane

C'E n'est pas son histoire que j'ai la prétention d'écrire. Son épopée est trop connue, le sillage qu'elle a tracé à travers le monde, depuis la Palestine, au temps des Croisés, jusqu'aux Etats-Unis, au temps de Rochambeau, est trop lumineux pour que quelques anecdotes glanées de ci de là ajoutent à son lustre. Quel est d'ailleurs l'intérêt qu'offrirait le récit de son passé à des lecteurs américains? Quand je leur aurais appris que sept mille gentilshommes se firent tuer à Azincourt en une seule journée pour arrêter l'Anglais envahisseur, que la race des Bourbons est la plus illustre des races royales, et que madame la duchesse d'Uzès est la première des duchesses de France, la noblesse française grandirait-elle à leurs yeux d'une coudée? Il en est de la réputation des castes comme de celle des individus; leur ascendance les classe. Au bout d'un certain temps les individus ne s'appartiennent plus en propre; aux yeux du monde qui les juge, ils sont, bon gré mal gré, ce que leurs pères ont été, avec leurs mêmes vices et leurs mêmes vertus.

Toute différente est une étude de la noblesse française telle qu'elle est, telle qu'elle vit à l'heure actuelle. Quelle place elle occupe dans l'état. Quelle est son influence sur la marche des affaires publiques? A défaut d'influence, quelle est sa mentalité? Est-ce une vieille bigote, ratatinée dans une sorte de "religium tremens"? Est-ce au contraire une jeune écrivainette avec des propensions à courir la prétentaine? Autant de questions qu'il est intéressant de poser, d'abord parce qu'on peut les résoudre, ensuite

parce que l'étranger apprendra par la solution qui leur sera donnée—quel est le degré de considération politique, intellectuelle et morale qu'il est en droit de lui accorder.

## I

LA noblesse moderne date de la Révolution française, c'est-à-dire de 1789. Elle a donc un peu plus de cent ans, ce qui est vraiment un âge fort peu avancé dans un pays qui aura bientôt 1600 ans d'existence; non qu'elle ait été formée alors, mais c'est alors qu'elle s'est transformée, qu'elle s'est en quelque sorte faite "peuple," qu'elle a cessé d'être une classe privilégiée dans l'état pour y devenir un simple ornement. Jusqu'alors la noblesse avait été un ordre politique; l'antique constitution française l'avait associée à l'exercice du pouvoir; elle était un des trois points d'appui du roi de France dans l'exercice de ses droits; les deux autres s'appelaient le tiers état, c'est-à-dire le peuple proprement dit et le clergé, ce qui permet de dire que la monarchie française fut une monarchie à la fois aristocratique, nationale et cléricale.

Pourquoi la noblesse perdit son privilège, pourquoi elle fut nivelée, pourquoi tout à coup il n'y eut plus en 1789 qu'un peuple et que des citoyens exerçant des droits identiques; autant voudrait pour répondre à ces interrogations écrire l'histoire entière de la Révolution française. Qu'il nous suffise de constater le fait sans le discuter, moins encore sans l'expliquer. Mais ce qu'il importe de connaître, c'est la façon dont cette noblesse accepta sa

dépossession, quelle fut sa participation à l'incarnation démocratique de la France, si, en un mot, elle bouda la démocratie, ou si elle lui prêta le concours de son intellectualité.

Je remarque d'abord que les deux noms qui dominent les fameux états généraux, d'où est sortie notre moderne ossature, sont deux noms de nobles. Mirabeau et Talleyrand sont sans conteste les deux chefs qui ont présidé à la transformation, entraînant par leur exemple, par la logique de leurs raisonnements, et par leurs talents, l'opinion et le vote de leurs collègues. De 1789 à 1791 ils furent les deux étoiles du firmament révolutionnaire, éclairant la marche triomphale du peuple français vers la liberté. Et tous deux avaient dans les veines non-seulement du sang de gentilhomme, mais encore du sang de grands seigneurs.

En outre, il suffit d'ouvrir le compte-rendu des discussions parlementaires qui eurent lieu à l'assemblée constituante, pour acquérir la preuve que les grandes réformes qui, à cette époque, entrèrent dans nos mœurs et pénétrèrent ensuite les moëles de l'Europe entière, eurent pour promoteurs des membres de l'ordre de la noblesse.

C'est ainsi que "l'égalité" entra dans nos codes, non comme une conquête mais comme un don. Ce fut bénévolement, sans contrainte, que le comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, député de Paris, à la tête de quarante-six nobles aussi authentiques que lui-même, pénétra dans la salle où délibéraient "à part," suivant l'ancienne loi constitutionnelle, les représentants directs du peuple; s'adressant à eux il leur dit: "Nous cédon's à l'impulsion de nos consciences, et nous venons travailler avec vous au grand œuvre de la régénération publique." Le grand mot était lâché: la régénération publique. Désormais il n'y aura plus ni noblesse ni tiers état! Il n'y aura que la chose publique. Et de la chose publique à la république, il n'y a pas l'épaisseur d'un cheveu!

Mais il faut que l'égalité qui s'annonce soit effective; et comme c'est la noblesse qui possède les privilèges, c'est

la noblesse qui doit en être dépouillée. Elle le comprend, elle s'en dépouille elle-même. Jugeant le sacrifice indispensable elle va au devant de lui. Dans la nuit du 4 août 1789, le vicomte de Noailles, le descendant d'une des plus illustres maisons de France, s'écrie: "Les communautés ont fait des demandes . . . qu'ont-elles donc demandé? Que les droits d'aides fussent supprimés . . . que les droits seigneuriaux fussent allégés ou échangés. Ces communautés voient, depuis plus de trois mois, leurs représentants s'occuper de ce que nous appelons, et de ce qui est, la chose publique; mais la chose publique leur paraît être surtout la chose qu'elles désirent, et qu'elles souhaitent ardemment d'obtenir." Et, ces paroles prononcées, Noailles propose aux membres de son ordre de décider:

1—Que désormais l'impôt sera payé par tous les individus du royaume, dans la proportion de leur revenu.

2—Que toutes les charges publiques seront supportées également.

3—Que tous les droits féodaux seront rachetables par les communautés.

4—Que les corvées seigneuriales, les mainmortes et autres servitudes personnelles, seront détruites sans rachat.

Entraîné par ce jeune homme au cœur généreux et à l'esprit ouvert, l'ordre entier de la noblesse défile à la tribune, chacun renonçant à quelque chose, s'obligeant à payer comme le premier venu, immolant sur l'autel de l'égalité des droits datant de temps immémoriaux. Exode admirable vers la démocratie de toute une classe de la société française qui avait acquis ses privilèges au prix du sang répandu par les ancêtres sur les champs de bataille du monde entier.

Cette nuit est restée célèbre dans nos annales. Je ne crois pas qu'elle ait sa similaire chez aucune nation.

Elle fut le point de départ de la formation moderne des peuples européens. Tous, tôt ou tard, Allemands ou Anglais, entreront dans le moule fondu alors. Et ce sera un Français

de vieille roche, comptant dans sa famille des ministres, des cardinaux et des maréchaux, qui, parlant au nom de sa caste et l'entraînant après lui, aura eu la gloire d'apporter à la France et à notre continent les germes prolifiques de l'égalité! Je dois à mes lecteurs de leur apprendre que c'est aux Etats-Unis que Noailles a entrevu l'auréole de libéralisme et de modernisme qui s'attache à son nom. Il avait été un des lieutenants de Rochambeau, lors de la guerre de l'Indépendance. A fréquenter les Américains, il avait appris ce que vaut l'individu, quel qu'il soit, dans une société bien étayée!

Sans la liberté, l'égalité n'est qu'un château de cartes; une fois nivelée la France voulut la liberté. Ce fut encore sa noblesse qui la lui octroya.

La plus précieuse de toutes, la liberté religieuse, eut pour promoteur mon aïeul, le comte de Castellane. Ce n'est pas sans une certaine fierté, je l'avoue, que j'ai reçu cet héritage. Se dire que son sang est pour quelque chose dans la disparition d'un sectarisme qui, au cours de notre histoire, avait fait couler tant de larmes, c'est constater que les titres de noblesse de sa famille ne sont pas oblitérés! Et mon aïeul eut d'autant plus de courage à proposer et à faire insérer dans la déclaration des droits de l'homme la liberté des cultes, qu'il battait ainsi en brèche la vieille formule monarchique: le trône et l'autel! Il délivrait la royauté. Celle-ci cessait d'être l'Evêque du dehors, comme on disait alors, pour devenir un simple témoin, le témoin de l'âme française obéissant à ses convictions. Tout le vieil édifice monarchico-clerical s'écroulait. La colère des prêtres réduits à l'action personnelle, la stupeur des seigneurs qui avaient pris l'habitude de faire de leurs fils des évêques, dans le seul but de leur obtenir de plantureux bénéfices, n'eurent point d'égales au cours de ces célèbres discussions. On se menaça; on se battit; Mirabeau-Tonneau, le frère du grand Mirabeau et son adversaire, retournant sa célèbre phrase à l'envoyé de Louis XVI.,

lorsque celui-ci vint signifier aux trois ordres de délibérer séparément, s'écria: "Nous ne sortirons d'ici qu'on ne nous en arrache, à moins qu'on n'ait déclaré que la religion catholique est la seule religion nationale; sans cela nous mourrons plutôt sur les bancs!" C'est que la motion du comte de Castellane était un écroulement. Désormais, plus de compression, plus de guerre aux philosophes ou aux protestants! Plus d'attirail céleste dans l'état! A la place, des consciences libres, un état libre, et des églises libres, comme chez vous, mes chers lecteurs! Il est vrai qu'à l'heure où je trace ces lignes les églises françaises ne sont pas complètement libérées, mais fatalement elles le seront le jour prochain où elles se sépareront volontairement d'un état dont la mauvaise humeur ne pourra être vaincue qu'à la condition de ne réclamer de lui ni aide ni subsides.

Après la liberté religieuse, la liberté de la presse! C'est encore un noble, et quel noble! Le chef de la célèbre maison de la Rochefoucauld, qui en est l'initiateur! "Tout citoyen a le droit de manifester ses opinions, sous la seule condition de ne pas nuire à autrui!" Voilà la motion qu'il fait inscrire dans la déclaration des droits de l'homme. Et pour obtenir de ses collègues qu'ils la votent, il ajoute: "La presse a détruit le despotisme, c'est elle qui précédemment avait détruit le fanatisme!" Quelques mois plus tard, quelqu'un proposera de taxer la circulation des journaux. Il s'y opposera en disant: "Personne ne révoquera en doute que, de tous les commerces, celui des idées soit le plus précieux, et je crois que vous devez le favoriser de toutes les manières."

Ce fut encore un grand seigneur français, le comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, qui formula dans le premier comité constitutionnel des Etats généraux les bases de notre droit politique moderne. Il fit inscrire cet aphorisme dans nos codes: "Quand la manière de gouverner ne dérive pas de la volonté du peuple claire-

ment exprimée, il n'a pas de constitution." Et, partant de ce principe, il déclarait responsable devant la nation "tous les fonctionnaires, tous ceux qui, de près ou de loin, touchaient à l'état, sauf le roi." Le roi de France devenait un automate enchassé! Ceux qui de loin suivent nos affaires, reconnaîtront dans ce roi-là notre président de la république actuel. De Louis XVI., roi de l'assemblée constituante de 1789, à M. Loubet, président de la République Française de 1902, il n'y a qu'un pas. On n'est pas plus nouveau-jeu que ne le fut le comte de Clermont-Tonnerre!

Mais il n'a pas suffi alors à la noblesse française de codifier les droits du peuple; elle a eu d'autres gloires plus effectives: celle de doter le pays du régime financier qui le régit encore aujourd'hui, dont il a retiré cent années d'une prospérité sans seconde; et celle de créer à l'usage du pauvre une assistance d'état obligatoire, au lieu et place de la charité individuelle et facultative. C'est à deux grands seigneurs que nous devons et notre premier budget et notre premier système d'assistance. L'un, le duc de la Rochefoucauld, dont j'ai déjà parlé, créa de toutes pièces le bloc, dit des quatre contributions. A la "taille," qui était un impôt d'autant plus odieux qu'il frappait seulement le petit peuple, il substituait l'impôt "régénéré," c'est-à-dire égal pour tous, portant sur toutes les sources du revenu. Au cours de l'interminable discussion à laquelle donna lieu le premier budget législatif, la Rochefoucauld acheva de poser les bases d'une juste comptabilité financière dans une démocratie. En se reportant aux discours qu'il tint, au nom du comité des finances, on retrouve tous les desiderata des réformateurs actuels ajournés, grâce aux dissipations et aux guerres de nos gouvernants. Quant à l'assistance publique, ce fut le duc de Liancourt qui en traça l'ébauche. Elle est résumée tout entière dans cette motion que le 27 septembre 1791 il fit voter par les Etats généraux: "L'assistance des pauvres, dans tous les âges et dans

toutes les circonstances de la vie, est mise au rang des devoirs les plus sacrés de la nation. Ses représentants en font une charge nationale, à laquelle il sera pourvu ainsi qu'aux dépenses pour l'extinction de la mendicité sur les revenus publics dans l'étendue qui sera nécessaire."

Tous ces souvenirs sont extrêmement glorieux pour la noblesse de France. Ils prouvent qu'au début de l'ère moderne cette noblesse emboîta résolument le pas à la marche en avant du pays, et que dans la lutte de celui-ci contre l'oppression elle continua à se battre avec le même courage, le même renoncement, qu'elle avait toujours montrés sur tous les champs de bataille. Aussi, lorsque la Révolution française en 1814 semble avoir dit avec la déchéance de Bonaparte son dernier mot, c'est à elle que la France abattue s'en remet du soin de la relever. Quiconque est de bonne foi, doit reconnaître que les deux hommes qui successivement alors la délivrèrent du cauchemar de l'envahissement, furent Talleyrand et le duc de Richelieu, deux gentilshommes de haute race! En 1814, comme en 1789, la noblesse est partout en tête de tous les mouvements émancipateurs. J'ajoute qu'elle a même la primauté des lettres; car Chateaubriand, un noble lui aussi! éclaire le siècle des rayons de son génie, alors que Lamartine et Musset, tous les deux gentilshommes, se préparent à y ajouter les leurs et à faire de cette union un immense éblouissement!

## II

1902! Tout est changé! Les nobles ne sont nulle part, ni au pouvoir, ni à la tête de l'armée, ni à celle du mouvement politique ou intellectuel! Tout au plus demeurent-ils confinés dans les quelques châteaux qui leur restent, d'où ils se figurent exercer un prestige que nuls, sauf quelques "snobs" énamourés de particules, n'aperçoivent autour d'eux! Notre noblesse se transforme peu à peu mais sûrement en musée.



Au lieu de demeurer une modernité elle devient une antiquité! Peut-être après avoir créé le mouvement en avant, croit-elle le moment venu d'entrer "de plano" dans l'immortalité? Cette interrogation nous conduit tout naturellement à examiner quelle est sa mentalité. Recherchons-la au quadruple point de vue qui constitue la capacité gouvernementale d'une caste: la politique, la religion, les impôts et le travail!

J'appartiens à cette noblesse; j'ai vécu toute mon existence à son contact, et ce contact ne fut souillé par aucune compromission, puisque je suis arrivé à la vie publique alors que monarchies et empires étaient déjà loin. J'affirme que depuis vingt-deux ans je n'ai pas rencontré parmi mes pairs un seul irréductible. Que la république nous assure la liberté! C'était la seule protestation. L'on n'ajoutait pas: "et nous la servirons!" mais on le pensait. Et s'il s'agissait de déférer aux instructions d'un prétendant, non-seulement on les discutait, mais encore on y désobeissait sans hésiter. Nous avons tous vu le phénomène se produire lorsque le comte de Paris, l'héritier des rois! tenta de rallier sa bonne noblesse autour du panache du général Boulanger. Celle-ci se coupa en deux; la moitié alla au panache, l'autre moitié le couvrit de pommes cuites! Comment en eut-il été autrement d'une caste où les hommes se découvrent à peine devant un prince du sang qui passe, tandis que les femmes ont complètement désappris les courbettes et jusqu'à la façon de leur faire la révérence! Donc, j'ai le droit de conclure que, tous, nous sommes imbus de républicanisme. Sans que nous nous en rendions compte peut-être, nous avons désappris l'obéissance, et si, par un coup du hasard, la monarchie nationale était rendue à la France, nous ferions de très mauvais monarchistes. La mentalité politique de la noblesse est aussi républicaine que celle du peuple. Nos pères ont créé la démocratie, nous reflétons, par un phénomène atavique et à notre insu, leur création.

En revanche, notre mentalité religieuse est en raison inverse de celle des masses. Tandis qu'elles se déchristianisent, nous nous rechristianisons. Tandis que la foule reste fidèle à deux ou trois pratiques seulement du culte catholique qui sont des marques initiales, telles que le baptême et la première communion, nous faisons volontiers, à toute heure, montre de notre foi. L'Etre suprême de 1789, inventé par un noble, le comte de Virien, est relegué au magasin des vieilles guitares, et nous nous réclamons ouvertement de Dieu et de ses saints. Qui a creusé ce fossé entre la France et la noblesse? C'est le laïcisme à haute dose introduit dans l'instruction primaire depuis vingt ans d'une part, tandis que de l'autre nous avons gardé le droit de mettre la conscience de nos enfants dans le moule de crédulité plus que de foi, fabriqué par les Jésuites. De ce droit nous avons usé, je pourrais dire abusé. Pour nous, tout homme qui n'a pas la foi et qui l'avoue, est bien près d'être une canaille. Le temps est loin où le duc de Liancourt, président des Etats généraux le 3 août 1789 levait purement et simplement la séance parce qu'un curé avait eu l'audace de proposer à l'assemblée de se déclarer "catholique, apostolique et romaine." Un noble qui actuellement agirait de la sorte, serait conspué dans tous les clubs mondains. Non-seulement nous ne sommes pas des libres penseurs, mais encore nous n'entendons pas que ceux qui sont nobles comme nous pensent librement. Il y a une discipline religieuse; nous devons nous y soumettre.

En matière d'impôts l'antinomie est la même. La démocratie paysannesque et ouvrière considère que le salaire n'est que le prix du travail, sans en être la récompense, et elle réclame la participation aux bénéfices. Pour nous sa prétention est une monstruosité; nous la repoussons comme une atteinte à la propriété, et, dans la crainte que l'on impose progressivement nos immeubles, nous nous déclarons les adversaires irréductibles de



la seule mesure fiscale qui puisse les dégrèver, et qui s'appelle l'impôt sur le revenu. Et le peuple insiste; et nous résistons au peuple! Et la colère du peuple monte! Il nous chasse, peu à peu, de nos derniers retranchements; il s'en empare; quelques années, quelques mois encore, et il nous traitera en parias auxquels il convient de faire rendre gorge. D'une lutte fiscale, par notre entêtement nous aurons fait une lutte sociale, et, en voulant enchaîner le vent, nous aurons déchaîné la tempête. Le peuple est-il injuste lorsqu'il dit aux riches: payez à l'état ce que vous lui devez? Les nobles, il y a cent treize ans, ne le pensaient pas; ceux d'aujourd'hui n'osent pas avouer tout haut que leurs capitaux et leurs valeurs doivent être exempts de participation aux charges publiques, mais au fond ils le pensent.

Reste la question de travail! Les nobles sont-ils nés pour travailler ou pour ne rien faire? Chair de Don-Juan ou chair à canon? C'était de ce double limon que sous l'ancien régime était pétri leur personnage. Les nobles d'aujourd'hui se font de leur rôle social une autre idée. Soit intuition, soit nécessité, mais plutôt nécessité, ils commencent à glorifier le travail. Au lieu d'en faire une "diminutio capitis," ils en font une parure. Les grands initiateurs de la France moderne avaient entrevu cette inversion.

Dès 1800, le vicomte de Noailles, celui que ses renoncements dans la nuit du 4 août avaient rendu célèbre, écrivait à son fils: "La révolution qui s'est accomplie en France exclut des places et des honneurs l'ignorance et l'oisiveté . . ." Et par le fait on pourrait citer chez nous, à l'heure actuelle, plus d'un gentilhomme qui s'est fait volontairement fabriquant de vin de Champagne, planteur d'orangers, constructeur d'automobiles, le comte Florent de Castellane, le comte de Chabannes, le marquis de Dion, etc. Ne rien faire n'est plus en honneur comme sous le roi Louis Philippe ou sous l'empereur Napoléon III. Quand on

dit d'un jeune homme ce qu'Horace disait des jeunes seigneurs romains:

*Gaudet equis et aprici gramine campi,*

il semble qu'on lui décerne un brevet de dédain, et celui que nous appelions jadis "un gentil gigolo," est bien près aujourd'hui de se voir traité de simple imbécile.

De cette récapitulation il résulte que la mentalité de la noblesse française, à l'heure actuelle, correspond exactement à la mentalité du peuple français sur deux points: celui de la forme républicaine et celui de l'égalité devant le travail; au contraire elle diffère du tout au tout, en ce qui concerne les sentiments religieux du pays et la participation des citoyens aux charges publiques.

Quelle est la conséquence de cette diversité de vues? Elle vient de s'affirmer de façon tangible dans la dernière consultation électorale, et sous la forme d'une lutte au couteau entre le peuple et les hautes classes de la société, à la tête desquelles marche la noblesse. Il semble que peuple et noblesse aient livré un combat suprême et, bien entendu, c'est la noblesse qui n'étant ni le nombre ni la puissance de l'argent a mordu la poussière. Pouvait-elle éviter la défaite? Je n'hésite pas à répondre oui. Je fonde mon affirmation sur ce fait que partout où elle a reconnu la justesse des revendications populaires en matière d'impôts, que partout où elle n'a pas tenté de faire de ses convictions religieuses une politique d'agression contre la libre pensée, elle a été soutenue et choisie pour le représenter par le peuple s'inclinant sans honte devant l'accumulation des services rendus à la France par certaines familles. C'est donc sa faute si elle a perdu la bataille. Vaincue, quel est son avenir? C'est ce qui nous reste à examiner.

### III

La noblesse française a-t-elle un avenir? Les fautes qu'elle a commises sont-elles réparables? Va-t-elle petit à petit et de plus en plus couler à

l'oubli? Tous ces grands noms, qui évoquent tant de hauts faits, La Trémolle, Uzès, La Rochefoucauld, Talleyrand, Noailles, Maillé, Richelieu et bien d'autres, sont-ils destinés à s'enfoncer dans les nuages de la légende, tandis que ceux des auneurs au mètre ou des grands marchands d'épices, les Boucicault, les Dufayel, les Potin, conquerront la gloire et la renommée? En un mot, une noblesse démocratique, fondée sur les services rendus à l'état par la canelle ou par le chocolat, est-elle en train de refouler dans les lointains de l'histoire la vieille noblesse militaire française desséchée et exsangue? Tout dépendra des persistances de la scission d'idées faite actuellement entre la démocratie et nous. Prendrons-nous la tête du mouvement démocratique, ou nous laisserons-nous remorquer par lui en protestant? Dans le premier cas, les paysans français se rallieront autour de leurs chefs naturels parce qu'après tout ils sont chauvins, qu'ils aiment la gloire, qu'ils sont fiers de l'illustration de familles nées du même sol qu'eux. Dans le second cas, ils nous tireront leur révérence avec une rancune rentrée dont ils seront disposés à nous faire pâtir tôt ou tard. Et alors que deviendrons-nous?

Il n'est que trop facile de le prédire. Nous ne disparaîtrons pas, parce que, comme le reste des Français, nous suivrons la loi de la nature, et que nous continuerons, quoi qu'il arrive, à faire des enfants. Mais quels enfants! Des fils et des filles qu'avant peu, une ou deux générations au plus, notre code destructeur aura prodigieusement appauvris. Car nous ne jouissons pas comme vous, mes chers lecteurs américains, de la liberté de tester. Celle-ci vous permet de faire riche, opulent, celui que vous avez choisi de préférence pour perpétuer votre nom et pour

conserver les richesses acquises. Nos lois à nous détruisent par principe nos propres efforts, en vue de grandir le prestige du nom que nous portons. Jusqu'à ce jour la noblesse française a pu compenser, par de plantureuses alliances contractées à l'étranger, le vide fait dans ses caisses par les lois. Mais combien de temps cette possibilité durera-t-elle? Les héritières se fatigueront de ne venir en France que pour s'entendre appeler: "Madame la marquise," ou "Madame la duchesse," d'autant qu'elles n'y porteront même plus le sceptre de l'élégance mondaine, lequel avait été le monopole exclusif de leurs *prédécesrices*. Paris étant devenu le centre des élégances du monde entier, l'élégance par une fatalité inouïe, de "nationale" qu'elle était, est devenue "internationale." Le dernier des Français élégants fut le prince de Sagan. Depuis sa disparition de la scène mondaine, ce ne sont plus les Français qui font la mode et qui s'efforcent de donner le bon ton, ce sont les étrangers.

Je conclus en disant à mes pairs:

Faites ce que vos aïeux ont fait il y a cent treize ans. Allez au devant des aspirations populaires. Vous ne pouvez être quelque chose dans votre pays que par le peuple, non tel que vous voudriez qu'il fut, mais tel qu'il est. Si vous allez à lui, il viendra à vous. Il se complaira à être l'auteur de votre grandissement, à vous octroyer de nouvelles lettres de noblesse, des lettres modernes! Celles-là, pour être moins éclatantes que celles qui vous ont été léguées, n'en seront pas moins réconfortantes. Ce seront les lettres de la paix au lieu d'être les lettres de la guerre. Nobles de France, marchez à la conquête de ces parchemins-là, ou bien renoncez à toute primauté dans votre belle patrie!



## ENCOURAGING

**H**E—I have a feeling that before the evening is over I shall kiss you.  
**S**HE—How many times?

## TO DESTINY

O DESTINY, I triumph over thee!  
 Lo! thou hadst sworn my sorrows should not pass,  
 That all my griefs should never go, alas!  
 But hush! a little love has come to me.

Oh, happiness walks ever at my side,  
 Since my beloved swept my tears away;  
 Love guards my heart through every golden day,  
 And grief, O Destiny, has died, has died!

I had not dreamed, what time I was asleep,  
 That happiness could make me shed these tears;  
 Lo! yesterday and in the vanished years  
 I wept for sorrow—now for joy I weep!

Thou, Destiny, who erstwhile conquered me,  
 Since Love is mine, shalt henceforth bend and bow  
 And in submission serve me—even thou,  
 Great Destiny, my humble slave shalt be!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



## THE UNCERTAINTY OF WOMAN

THERE was once a cat named Thomas. He had a fine mistress, who was very proud of him, and used often, in speaking to visitors, to praise his great size, his glossy coat and the grand wave of his tail.

Thomas once took a night off. Meeting some other cats, a disagreement arose and several fights ensued. Thomas was in each fight. A free-for-all followed, after which Thomas passed on. Some boys shied stones at him, and he took refuge in a stable. He was hoisted out of a window by the kick of a horse and landed in the mud.

Thomas then passed through a coal yard, and explored a gas-works, coming in contact with much coal-tar. Feeling hungry, he made a meal from the garbage-can, and, being chased by a dog, he ran, and was shot at by two policemen.

Journeying onward, Thomas finally met the largest and strongest and wickedest cat in town. Engaging him in conversation, reference was made to a certain Miss Tabby, beloved by both. Fierce jealousy possessed each, and they fought after the manner of demons for the space of twenty minutes, a multitude of people contributing missiles.

It being now morning, Thomas started homeward, where, on his arrival some hours later, hearing that his mistress had some fine company in the drawing-room, he decided to go in, to the end that she might exhibit him and praise his great size, his glossy coat and the grand wave of his tail.

Coming out a moment later, Thomas was heard to exclaim, in a bitter tone: "Frailty, thy name is woman!"

HAYDEN CARRUTH.

# MRS. OGILVIE

By Theodosia Garrison

THE solemn butler had said: "I will see when Mr. Ogilvie expects to return, sir," and shown Tressenden into the closely shuttered drawing-room. The place radiated a delightful cellar-like coldness, likewise a cellar-like darkness to eyes dazzled by the Midsummer glare without, and Tressenden stumbled over the edge of a rug and sank into a linen-draped chair with a sigh of relief. "Praise the Lord!" he said, piously, and ran his fingers through his damp hair.

The girl, who from an opposite corner of the room had watched his entrance with great interest, laughed suddenly and unrestrainedly, and Tressenden rose confusedly to his feet.

"I beg your pardon," he said, into the darkness, "I thought I was quite alone."

The girl came toward him slowly, and to Tressenden the room seemed to brighten visibly with her approach. She was a slip of a thing in a fluttering white gown, and her dark hair was pushed childishly away from her face. There was a great amusement in her eyes as they looked into Tressenden's embarrassed countenance.

"But, monsieur is right," she said, seriously, quite as if she had followed his train of thought. "It is of a warmth to-day; never have I known such heat. This"—she designated the room with a pretty fluttering of her hands—"is the only cool place in this so-detestable house."

"I am most fortunate to be here," said Tressenden, "though, unfortunately, my stay is to be very short."

He looked at the small person with an interest not wholly untinged with admiration. How pretty she was and how dainty! and just how did she happen to be stopping at the house of Ogilvie at this ungracious time of year, when the two elderly sisters of the place were allowing their angular forms to be swept by ocean breezes at Newport, and the host had, according to his butler, departed for parts unknown?

"I have brought the plans for Mr. Ogilvie's house at Bath," he explained. "There were some alterations he wished, and we were anxious to have him see them. You can tell me, perhaps, when he will be at home."

She sighed, plaintively. "A week or more," she said. "A long time, monsieur. It is very dull here by myself in this big house—big as a convent and not half so gay—and with only Jeanne to talk to. The days are very long, monsieur. About the bath-house," she added, politely but vaguely, "I do not understand, monsieur."

"Who in the world," thought Tressenden, "can she be?" He ran through the gamut of acquaintances hurriedly and rejected them all as impossible. "As to the house," he echoed, "it is to be a very delightful place indeed, if the old—if Mr. Ogilvie wouldn't give so much of his personal attention to it. It's to be a gift for his bride. You know, he was married in the Spring."

To his surprise, she colored, delicately. "Oh, yes, monsieur," she said, "I knew it. In fact," she laughed wickedly, "I was there—

what you call 'present.' Only a little month has he been home, and then, suddenly, he is gone again—what one might call a second marriage journey, monsieur."

"I should have come sooner," said Tressenden, "but I have been on a bit of a trip myself; not of the same character, however! I got to town only yesterday." He put his plans in his pocket. "There's scarcely any use of my waiting for a man who has formed the habit of protracting his honeymoon;" and he laughed.

"But must you go, monsieur?" she said. She moved a step nearer, and her dark eyes looked wistfully into his. "The—the day is warm, and I am *triste* here alone for so many days. Would it be hard for monsieur to stay but a little while?"

"Monsieur is only too charmed," said Tressenden, promptly. "You adorable little thing!" he added, to himself. "Have you been shut up here long?" he asked; "all this beastly weather? Haven't you been driving? The Park isn't half bad on a day like this."

She shook her head, sorrowfully. "But no, monsieur," she said; "Jeanne, she will go nowhere. Only, she sits and cries for her Paris, over and over as a cat cries, and I will not go alone. It is not good to be alone with no one who can laugh beside one. And I have been here"—she counted daintily on the tips of her fingers—"three whole weeks, monsieur."

"Do you stay much longer?" asked Tressenden, with rather an uncomfortable feeling of endeavoring to discover what he had no business to ask.

She looked at him, curiously. "But indefinitely, monsieur, of course. Oh, but it gives one the feeling of homesickness, that word!" There was a little quiver in her voice as she spoke. "Always in my mind is a picture of the convent garden, with the good sisters coming and going from the chapel, and the girls with their arms about one another's waists,

up and down the walks in the afternoons. And the apple-trees, monsieur! They were all in blossom when I left, and when the wind blew they would turn from pink to white, and from white to pink again. Always I am thinking of the apple-blossoms." She paused and looked at him, wistfully. "I do not know why I tell this, when I do not even know monsieur's name. It is droll, is it not, that I make monsieur a priest, that I may tell him a little confession of the heart? And on this so hot morning, too! But, then"—she laughed and there was an adorable break of dimples about her mouth—"it was monsieur who said the prayer as he entered!"

Tressenden smiled sympathetically at her bright face. He longed to comfort her as he might a pretty child, the dainty, homesick being, whom nature had apparently meant to be gay and light of heart as a bird. Just why, he wondered, was she beating her wings in this Holland-draped cage? He smiled as he answered her.

"My name is Tressenden," he said; "Edward Tressenden, and I am something like a sixth cousin, if there is such a thing, of Mr. Ogilvie, and his very good friend, although I see him only twice a year or so. (Which," he added, mentally, "may explain it.) And as for the rest, I am a poor and most embarrassingly honest architect—all architects are. But, really, I do not know why I should say all this to mademoiselle," he quoted, "when I do not even know mademoiselle's name."

The girl looked at him, quickly. There was a great astonishment in her eyes, and then, to Tressenden's amazement, she colored slowly from her chin to her dark hair.

"Monsieur does not know who I am?" she said. "But I thought—I understood—surely I imagined—you said you knew that Mr. Ogilvie was married, and—and I thought you knew who I was—who I am."

She paused, in smiling embarrassment at the architect's amazed face.



"Good Lord!" said Tressenden for the second time that morning.

Before his mind's eyes flashed a picture of Ogilvie, dignified, ponderous, white-haired, the pink and pattern of all a middle-aged millionaire should be. He knew, of course, that he had married abroad, and he remembered hearing in some indirect way that his wife was French. But that this child, this delicate bit of flower-like youth, should be the wife—he could have laughed aloud at the absurdity. It was grotesque, it was ridiculous, it was horrible!

"Monsieur is surprised?" asked the girl, wondering; "and why?"

"I beg your pardon," said Tressenden, vaguely, "but you seem so young so—really, for the moment I was confused. You see, I had no idea, none whatever, that I was addressing Mrs. Ogilvie."

The girl was certainly a creature of surprises. She stared blankly at Tressenden's face for a moment, and then, to his amazement, broke into sudden merry laughter and hid her glowing face in her small hands.

"But it is so droll, monsieur!" she said, presently. "I—I was so sure that you knew, and then to find that, after all, you guess. I am sure that it is Mr. Ogilvie will be surprised at that."

"I dare say," said Tressenden, cynically. "But why," he demanded, "aren't you with him? Isn't it rather an unusual proceeding for a man to go on his wedding trip without his bride?"

The girl shook her head, but there was the flutter of a smile on her lips. "It is strange," she said, "but I do not think—in fact, monsieur, I know—he did not wish me. Indeed," plaintively, "he made it very plain to me, monsieur."

"The brute!" thought Tressenden. No doubt the man realized his folly by now and was in no mood to picture himself a laughing-stock for the public. But to put this indignity upon her, to make her know! Tressenden's blood flamed in a righteous indignation.

"But it is not for long," the girl said.

"In a week he will be back, monsieur, and I have been promised many things. We are to go to the seaside, and there will be fêtes and dances." She clasped her hands, gleefully. "Oh, the convent will be quite forgotten, they tell me, monsieur."

"I dare say," said Tressenden. Poor child! The wretch had promised her these as he might offer a baby bonbons. To think that a marriage like this was possible anywhere outside of a French novel of the last century!

"You have never been away from your convent before?" he asked, gently.

"Only for a little vacation," she said, measuring the duration of time prettily between her forefingers; "and then, at the last, to make ready for the wedding, monsieur."

"Have you a father?" said Tressenden, bluntly.

"But no, monsieur," she sighed; "many years ago, when I was a baby, he died."

"Your mother, then?" said Tressenden; "she arranged this, perhaps?"

"Yes," said the girl, simply; "as monsieur says, it was quite her arrangement, quite. To be fair, though, Mr. Ogilvie it was who urged and urged and insisted. Oh, for many years he insisted."

"It must have been when you were in the cradle," said Tressenden, roughly.

The girl laughed. "Monsieur mistakes my age," she said. "But it is my mother who says this. As for me," blandly, "I did not see Mr. Ogilvie, never in my life, monsieur, before the day of the wedding."

"Oh, the limit!" said Tressenden, to himself, "the limit! He must have been mad!"

He stretched his hand for his hat, and hesitated. This hot July morning seemed a veriest Midsummer night's dream. After all, the distant claim of cousinship gave him some right to an intimacy with this pathetic, ill-used, adorable child. From this time on, while he repudiated the man, he would utilize the relationship.

"Mademoiselle," he began, "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Ogilvie——"

She stopped him. "The first name, I beg you, monsieur," she said. "It—it is good to hear it again. Never do I hear it in this place except from Jeanne. If you do not mind, monsieur," wistfully.

"With all my heart," said Tressenden. "Then, mademoiselle, I was about to suggest this: As you are lonely here and as the day is so warm, and as a hard-working architect has little or nothing to do on a July day, suppose you let me take you to the Park this afternoon?"

She interrupted him with a little rapturous cry. "Monsieur is too good!" she said. "Oh, I will be glad, so glad! If only Jeanne will consent. Jeanne," she explained, "is my maid, monsieur."

"You will explain to her that I am Mr. Ogilvie's cousin," said Tressenden, "and," he smiled a bit grimly, "that accordingly I, too, am your cousin, mademoiselle. At four, then."

"At four," said mademoiselle, fervently.

Tressenden sat long before his open window that night and smoked many pipes and meditated largely. The afternoon had been one to remember. Mademoiselle, having apparently a maid as pliable as *Fuliet's* nurse, had greeted him upon the very doorstep, and they had spent together what, Tressenden suddenly realized, was the most enjoyable afternoon of his life. Mademoiselle had exclaimed, had sparkled, had enjoyed, had been with difficulty restrained from picking flowers and finding herself in the stern grasp of the law, and had given herself, heart and soul, to the feeding of squirrels. Imagine a Mrs. Ogilvie feeding squirrels! Tressenden refilled his pipe, and smiled grimly. As for his venerable sixth cousin, some day, Tressenden told himself, he would have the very great pleasure of telling him to his face his opinion of this marriage. In the meantime, he would do his best to keep the poor little bride

from pining herself to death in that mausoleum of a house.

Tressenden lost all knowledge of himself in the great pity he felt for her—a butterfly about to be captured, a child with a woman's tragedy staring her in the face. After all, he reflected, as he put his head on his pillow, it was none of his business, but a man hated to see a relative, even as remote as a sixth cousin, make a fool of himself. Still, even a fool had a right to be consulted concerning the depth of a rear portico to his country house. It might be as well to-morrow to stop in for a moment and inquire of James where a letter would reach his master. James had a delightful way of leaving questions to be answered by others. Yet Mrs. Ogilvie would be the proper one to consult. Tressenden was a truthful man, with an adequate amount of humor, but he told himself this seriously before he fell asleep.

However, it was not in the Holland-draped room he saw her the next morning, but on the Avenue as he sped on his way to her house. She came toward him breezily, with a radiant smile of greeting, a black-gowned, small-bonneted female in attendance.

"It is all right," she explained to the latter, in rapid French; "you may go back. It is Mr. Ogilvie's nephew. He will take care of me. The house with the handkerchief tied to the door-knob. That," she explained to Tressenden, "is so we can find it easily. In this so-detestable place, all the houses are alike—until one distinguishes. You are coming to take me to feed the little beasts again, yes?" she inquired.

"I was coming to see you," said Tressenden. He suddenly lost all interest in his cousin's address. "And, of course, we will go to the Park if you wish. By the way, I have suddenly risen in the world; have I not, mademoiselle? From a sixth cousin to a nephew of Mr. Ogilvie is a dizzy elevation."

"It is all the same—in French,"

said mademoiselle, and she had the grace to blush as she laughed.

Mademoiselle fed the last nut to her squirrels, deplored with them that she had no more, and joined Tressenden in the shady, rustic Summer-house. "A shame, monsieur," she said, "that I have no more for that one." She designated a small, supplicating animal in the distance. "See, he with the face of the Mother Superior, who prays and beats his breast. If one might throw him a sou now and let him buy his own! Strange that Mr. Ogilvie told me nothing of these so-dear animals. Many things he told of America, but not this."

"Mr. Ogilvie is too busy with bulls and bears," said Tressenden.

"Bulls and bears!" said mademoiselle; "I do not understand." Whereupon Tressenden explained the stock-market in words of one syllable, to mademoiselle's complete satisfaction.

"Mr. Ogilvie would have made it much clearer to you, I dare say," said Tressenden. "He is what one might well call an authority on the subject."

A little smile lighted mademoiselle's face. "But no, monsieur," she said; "never is he serious with me. It is always, 'Here are bonbons, petite,' or, 'Here is a new ring,' or maybe a necklace. Few words he says to me otherwise. One should be content, perhaps."

"And—you are content?" said Tressenden. The question asked itself. He had not meant to touch on a matter so close to her, but, now that the words were uttered, he was conscious of a great curiosity as to the answer. She was a child, but not all a child. He had seen, with some intuitive vision in these two brief interviews, that something stronger and better lay beneath the surface lightness. "You are quite content?" he asked again.

Mademoiselle lifted her eyes to his, and then suddenly dropped them and checked the certain words on her lips.

"Who is, monsieur?" she said, simply. "Only, perhaps, the good sisters, and they gain heaven's peace early. Are you content, monsieur?"

"No," said Tressenden, shortly, and his heart beat a sudden alarm as he uttered the word.

"So it is," said mademoiselle, sagely; "yet, I have always prayed for it, monsieur, and, perhaps—who knows?—some day my prayers may be answered." She turned to him suddenly, with a little laugh. "Already one has been answered, monsieur," she said; "out of my mind the little animals put it and I forget, and I am very happy. My—Mr. Ogilvie returns to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Tressenden; "to-morrow!" He turned his eyes from mademoiselle's face to the green expanse beyond. What right, he asked himself, savagely, had he to feel stunned by the announcement? It was quite the usual thing for a man to curtail a business trip to return to his bride, and quite correct that the bride should show a proper amount of joy at the prospect. It was none of his business, whatever. But the awful injustice of it kept calling him from somewhere. He faced mademoiselle with a strange recklessness in his eyes.

"Every dog has his day, mademoiselle," he said. "I say that not because it is new, but because it is apt. To-morrow I go back to work, and it's going to be very hard work—much harder than you understand, and to-morrow you—well, a new sort of life will begin for you, I imagine. Suppose we two have a day of it? Let's go a-gypsyng and forget for a while that there is any one in the world but ourselves. We shall lunch—" he looked where the flag of the Casino fluttered in the breeze—"and we shall amble about afterward to suit ourselves, and you will not tell me every five minutes, as you did yesterday, that it is time to go home. Well, mademoiselle?"

Her eyes caught a sudden light from his. She swept him a bit of a saucy courtesy. "I am in the hands of

my sixth cousin—and Mr. Ogilvie's nephew," she said.

Mademoiselle flecked the last bit of salad aside on her plate, and laughed. "But monsieur is not gay," she said. "You have not laughed, oh, for minutes, and, when you looked long at me just now, you sighed. Why, monsieur? My story ended well; always the story of Aucassin and Nicolette ends well, and it is a pretty story, though monsieur has heard it long before."

"Not exactly as you tell it," laughed Tressenden, honestly, "and I did not mean to be sad, mademoiselle. I was thinking of another story, that had not such a satisfactory ending."

"Tell me," said mademoiselle. "I have heard other stories, though not," with a sudden justice to the place of her education, "at the convent, monsieur."

Tressenden smiled. "My story is not gay, mademoiselle, and I haven't the slightest intention of ever telling it to you. It is about a fool who stumbled in love, quite without the least intention of doing it, and with the smallest excuse in the world, with an utterly impossible person. It is not," he added, hastily, with a healthy disgust for himself, "a pleasant story."

"Was she as beautiful as Nicolette?" demanded mademoiselle.

"Quite," said Tressenden, briefly.

"At least," said mademoiselle, "that was an excuse."

"An explanation, perhaps," said Tressenden.

He rose rather hastily from the table. "Come, mademoiselle, let's to our gypsy-ing. Our day is three-quarters gone—worse luck!"

Mademoiselle sighed, softly. "Gypsy-ing—a pretty word," she said, "but gypsies surely do not say to each other, 'monsieur,' and, 'mademoiselle.' I will call you—what is the name, Ed—ward? That is right, is it not? And you will call me—" she paused, wickedly. "But monsieur knows my name. You will call me, 'Mrs. Ogilvie;' yes?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Tressenden, stiffly.

She laughed, joyously. "You may call me that to-morrow. To-day"—she stretched an impulsive hand to him—"to-day I am only and truly 'Toinette.'"

"Toinette!" reflected Tressenden. He might have guessed it, he told himself—the quaint, delicious abbreviation. It was like naming a flower to say it.

"Antoinette, really," said mademoiselle, "but there is too much of the guillotine and grandeur in that for to-day." She smiled at him through her lowered lashes. "And now, where, Edward?" she said.

It was Tressenden who, after all, suggested that the time of the parting of the ways had come, and this through no desire to deliver mademoiselle properly to her guardians at a reasonable hour, but because he knew that the twilight unlocks a man's speech against his will, and that forbidden thoughts sometimes stumble into words, and he was afraid. It was mademoiselle who protested.

"It is yet early," she said. "Look!" The sun was a dull crimson disk low in the west. There were queer, quivering shadows thrown across the lake and a sudden silence of birds' voices.

"It is a land of enchantment, a strange land," said mademoiselle. "Almost, I am afraid, Edward." She pressed a trifle closer to his arm.

"Time we were well out of it," said Tressenden, and smiled and sighed. "An enchanted land is a dangerous place, 'Toinette.'"

"I am not afraid of it—with you," she said.

"And I am not afraid of it—without you," said Tressenden.

There was a moment's silence. Mademoiselle sighed, softly. "Why must we go?" she asked.

Tressenden fought a moment with the question on his lips. Then he turned desperately, as one driven by an impulse stronger than himself.

"Tell me," he said, harshly, "do you love Mr. Ogilvie? One word—yes, or no. Tell me."

Mademoiselle hesitated, but in a moment found herself. She put Tressenden's question airily aside. "There is a carriage coming," she said, with apparently no interest in lesser things. "You said we should drive home. Is it this one that takes us?"

Tressenden mechanically raised his stick, as the cabby pulled up in the bend of the drive below. Then he turned bravely to the girl. "Just yes—or no," he demanded. "Tell me."

As he sat beside her in the hansom, his face grew strangely white. He told himself that he was a scoundrel and many other unpleasant things that he did not hesitate to name, because he was not heartily glad she answered as she did. Mademoiselle had looked from the sky to the ground, from the ground to his face and to the ground again, and had answered, in a suave and altogether inexplicable voice: "But yes, monsieur. Just for a moment you will come in, monsieur," she implored. "There is—I have—in fact, there is something I would say to you. Perhaps," she smiled wickedly, in the gathering darkness, "I would have you help me to console Jeanne. She will be like a madwoman with rage and anxiety. Fortunately, in there not one can understand."

Tressenden smiled bravely back at her. "Upon my word, mademoiselle," he said, "I had quite forgotten Jeanne."

"As for that," said "Toinette, frankly, "so had I."

"Wait for me a little moment," said mademoiselle. "In a second, I will be back."

She ran up the long flight of stairs lightly, as Tressenden entered the drawing-room. Under the white glow of the electric lights the room more than ever bore a striking resemblance to the female in the song, who requested at her death to be

"laid out in brown Holland," but Tressenden was not thinking of the room. He walked gloomily to the fireplace and stared into its blackness. After all, save for one little slip, he had not forgotten himself. He had not been guilty of the unpardonable sin of saying forbidden things to another man's wife. But he would put no more trust in himself. This should be his last interview with Mrs. Ogilvie, and the shorter and more impersonal the better. And yet, oh, the injustice, the pity of it!

There was a sudden stopping of wheels and a confusion of voices in the street, and a corresponding stir and confusion throughout the house. There seemed an eruption of servants from the lower regions. Tressenden drew himself together at the sound of a familiar voice from the outer door. "Not even the last ten minutes," he said, bitterly.

Mademoiselle, on the stairs, had heard the same voice, and, after the first gasp, with great presence of mind, sat down promptly where she had stood.

Mr. Ogilvie entered the drawing-room briskly—a younger, a less pompous person than Tressenden remembered him a twelvemonth ago. He caught Tressenden's rather reluctant hand, cordially.

"Most opportune, this, my dear boy," he said. "I was on the point of telegraphing you. I scarcely expected to reach here before this time to-morrow, and I was most anxious to see you. I have quite changed my mind about the entire upper floor. In fact, my wife—" He paused, as a figure appeared on the threshold.

"Tressenden, let me introduce you to Mrs. Ogilvie."

Tressenden made a hasty step forward. To be introduced to mademoiselle—to "Toinette, and by her husband! The pitiful farce of it!

"I have already—" he began, and stopped short. The tall and comely woman on the threshold smiled and bowed courteously, and wondered in her heart at the queer manners of



Americans. She turned to her husband, smiling. "But Toinette," she said, "where is the child? To hurry home on her account, and then not to find her waiting for us!"

She turned with a little mother's cry of gladness at the sound of a footstep in the hall. "Oh, Toinette, *here!*" she cried.

"I dare say it is news to you," said Ogilvie, "that I have a daughter to introduce, as well as a wife, Tressenden. Antoinette!"

He turned to the girl, but she stepped toward him. There was a certain anxiety mingled with the laughter in her brown eyes. "But we have already met, papa," she said. "Mr. Tressenden called yesterday to see you, and, indeed," she glanced demurely at Tressenden, "he guessed who I was at once, papa. I told him you would no doubt be surprised."

"You have heard, then?" said Ogilvie. "You mustn't imagine that Mrs. Ogilvie is a Parisian like mademoiselle, here. My wife is an Englishwoman," he explained to Tressenden, as one to whom a sixth-cousinly explanation was due; "but Antoinette's father was a Frenchman, and she has been brought up entirely in Paris. I dare say"—he patted the girl's hand lightly as he spoke—"that she will lead us staid New Yorkers a pretty dance. You will dine with us, of course, Tressenden."

"Indeed," said mademoiselle—it was some ten minutes before dinner, and Mr. and Mrs. Ogilvie would be down directly, so she spoke hurriedly—"indeed, I do not see why you are angry. Was it not your own fault?

Always did you name me—never once did I call myself Mrs. Ogilvie. And now, *voilà*," she sighed, helplessly, "you will not forgive me!"

"How could you!" said Tressenden. A dozen emotions seemed tearing at his heart. He was angry, he was jubilant, he was hurt, he was rejoiced. "But to have tricked me so!" he said.

"Always the truth," protested mademoiselle. "When you asked me if I loved *cher* papa, did I not answer truly?"

"I do not think that I put the question in just that form," said Tressenden, grimly.

"And—I am not forgiven?" said mademoiselle. "Such a jest, monsieur, for one who has been ennuied for three whole weeks! Oh, I am very sorry, monsieur."

There was a sound of footsteps on the stairs. Mademoiselle came very close, as close as she had come in the land of enchantment.

"Edward," said mademoiselle, softly.

In Tressenden's sudden grasp her hand was like blown foam.

"But one little, little untruth there was, monsieur," she whispered. "Your story—oh, monsieur, I knew your story, and when you would not tell it, I was angry that I could not make you, and perhaps I tried. Oh——"

The footsteps on the stair were very near. There was a moment's hushed silence; then mademoiselle faced Tressenden sedately. A mutinous dimple crept to the corner of her mouth, though her brow was severe.

"Such things are *not* allowed in the convent, monsieur," said mademoiselle.



## A PLANT

MRS. GARDNER—Why, don't you buy your flower seeds from Plantz any more?

MRS. GRAFTER—No; he cheated me last year. He gave me some helianthus-annus seeds that produced nothing but sunflowers.

# HONOR

By Gerard Roberts

CORPORAL ROBERT GRAY stood in the doorway of the Anderson mansion, which Colonel Tarleton had chosen for his headquarters while in Charleston, and looked out into the street.

"No one in sight," he murmured. "It wouldn't do for the colonel's orderly to be caught eavesdropping; but I must hear what Piggott has to tell."

He turned and tiptoed down the hall until he stood between two doors. Both were closed; from the left came the sound of talking, but at the right all was silent. Gray tried the knob of the door at that side. It turned without clicking, and the corporal peeped into the room. It was empty, and Gray walked softly to a window opposite him, which gave upon a hard gravel path leading around the house, and pushed it open. Then, cautiously, he returned to the door, examined the bolt, to see that it would slip easily, and went out.

"Now for it," he muttered; and without making a sound he crossed the hall. By putting his eye to the keyhole of the door, Gray could see Tarleton and Piggott. The colonel was seated at a table with paper and ink before him, and he held a quill in his hand. He was not writing, but staring gloomily at the floor and nervously chewing the feather of his pen. Lieutenant Piggott stood facing his commander. As Gray watched, Tarleton looked up.

"Piggott," he said, "this is the third foraging party cut off within a week. The rebels are getting bold. The information we got from that scout before we hanged him must

have been true. The Fox and Lincoln are probably gathering forces to attack me."

"Yes," assented Piggott, "and they seem to know every move you make."

"That's true. Marion is the very devil. Three foraging parties and five spies has he cost me, and the devil alone knows what he has got out of them. Not one of my letters for relief seems to have gone through. The Fox seems to know my weakness, though I have done everything to prevent its becoming known. Sometimes I think—oh, I don't know what to think! Curse the rebels! I wish I could hang them all!" And he looked worried and very angry as he lowered his glance to the carpet again.

"I think," said Piggott, slowly, "that they have a spy among us."

"A spy!" shouted Tarleton, leaping to his feet; "a spy among my men! You're daft."

"Don't get excited, colonel," returned Piggott. "There have been spies in regiments just as good and true as yours."

"But I know every one of my men."

"Oh, no, you don't. We've made several recruits lately."

"But it couldn't be one of them."

"It might be, though. I think it is."

"But who is it—who? Quick, man; don't you see you're driving me mad?" And the colonel wiped his pen viciously. "Demme, I never thought of it before. I believed that every one of the boys was true."

"Well," said Piggott, "the new men are Parker and Gregg and Early and Jewell and—and——"

"Yes, yes——"

Piggott hesitated a moment, and then asked:

"Where is your orderly?"

"At the end of the hall."

"He can't hear us?"

"No, no."

"Well, then—Gray."

"My orderly?"

"Yes. He's the one I suspect."

"God!" muttered the corporal, without; "he must have watched me."

"Suspect Gray, Piggott? Nonsense!" cried Tarleton. "Why, he's done me more service than any ten of the others. He saved my life in the skirmish at Burton."

"That may be true," said Piggott, "but I have seen——"

"Nonsense! I trust him."

"Very well. But since it is probable that there is a spy in the city, you will at least send out a party to search for him?"

"Yes, certainly."

"At once?"

Tarleton looked at his watch. "Five o'clock," he said. "Yes, at once. You— Hark!"

Gray had slipped and almost fallen. He recovered himself by grasping the knob of the door, but made so much noise that Tarleton heard him. The corporal did not wait to hear more; he slipped into the other room and closed the door. He was not a moment too soon, for, just as he was turning the bolt, he heard the door opposite thrown open. The bolt made a slight click in turning, and instantly Gray knew Tarleton and Piggott had heard it, for they crossed the hall and began to pound on the door.

"Open!" cried the colonel. "Orderly! Corporal of the guard!"

Gray made no reply, but went softly to the window and leaped out. He ran swiftly around the house and came in at the front doorway just in time to see Tarleton and Piggott throw down the door and rush into the room he had left. He drew himself up at the threshold, and when Tarleton turned, as he did in a moment, he saluted.

"Did you call, colonel?" he asked.

Tarleton fell back in amazement. Then he bounded forward and roughly put a hand on Gray's shoulder.

"Where have you been?" he shouted, staring fiercely into his eyes. "Why did you leave your post?"

"I beg pardon, colonel, but a suspicious-looking chap peered around the corner of the house a few moments ago and ran off when he saw me on the porch. I went out to watch him."

"How long were you gone?"

"Not more than five minutes."

Tarleton kept his eyes fixed on the corporal's. Gray did not lower his glance. Then Piggott took the colonel's arm and led him to the open window. They talked earnestly for a moment or two, and then returned to Gray.

"Take care, young man," said Tarleton, stopping in front of him. "You are only twenty-five. It would be a pity to hang you—a pity."

Gray saluted, and Tarleton and Piggott went into the office. This time they did not close the door. The corporal took up his stand on the porch, facing the street.

"Phew!" he said; "close shave! I wonder if the colonel suspects. I'm glad I'm going to-night. I—" He heard Tarleton call.

He turned, advanced to the office door, saluted and stood at attention. Tarleton finished sealing a letter, rose and handed it to him.

"Take that to Captain Preston and tell him to send Parker to take your place. You are free for the night."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." And Gray saluted once more as he turned away.

"A magnificent soldier, Piggott," he heard Tarleton say, "and a loyal gentleman, I believe. I should hate to hang him."

"I won't give you a chance," said the object of the colonel's compassion to himself, as he stepped off the porch and walked down the path.

When he reached the street he found it deserted. It was growing dark, and candles sent forth threads of light

from the windows of the houses. The air was cool and pleasant. Overhead the stars were beginning to come out, and at the end of the street the moon shone like a lantern.

"A fine night," thought Gray, as he walked along. "Let's see; I guess I had better go to my quarters and open this before giving it to Preston. No telling what it is. Ah, how much better I shall feel when I get out of this old place! Last time I shall come down here."

He came to a lonely part of the town, turned down a dark lane and finally reached a shakily building, before the door of which hung a battered signboard bearing the word, "Inn." No lights shone in the windows, however, nor did any sounds of merry-making come through the rickety door. Gray pushed it open, felt his way to a shaky ladder, and climbed into the loft. There he drew flint, steel and tinder from his pocket, and in a moment succeeded in lighting a candle, which illuminated the room dimly. It was a bare, barn-like place, with cracks and crannies. The only furniture was a pallet in one corner, a cupboard in another, a bare table in the centre, on which Gray placed the candle, and a box, which served as a chair.

Gray drew the box up to the table and sat down. He listened intently for an instant, and then took from his belt Tarleton's letter and a knife. The blade of the knife he held in the flame of the candle until it was heated; then he slipped it under the seal of the letter and removed the wax in one piece. Putting this carefully aside, he unfolded the paper and read the letter.

Captain Preston is hereby ordered to detach a party to search the town thoroughly for spies. Any persons found with treasonable documents upon them are to be shot immediately.

TARLETON,  
Colonel Commanding.

Gray gave a long, low whistle. "Glad I opened it," he said. Then he warmed the wax over the candle

and pressed it down in the spot it had occupied, and replaced the letter in his belt. From the cupboard he took plain clothes, which he rolled up in a bundle and placed on the table.

"Now for my papers," he murmured. He went to the cupboard again, stooped, and raised one of the floor boards. He felt around between the beams for a moment and found a small package. He examined this at the table and discovered it to be intact. Then he took from his breast a leather miniature-case and opened it. Within was the picture of a girl. Her soft blond hair curled in little ringlets over a broad white forehead; her cheeks were flushed with charming modesty; her eyes looked lovingly into Gray's, and her lips were slightly parted in a smile.

The corporal gazed at the face intently for a moment. His eyes grew tender and he smiled. "Dear Dorothy," he murmured, and raised the picture gently to his lips. Then he ripped the case with his knife, put in the papers at the back of the picture, and sewed up the rent.

"That's done," he said, and placed the case in his breast again. He put the bundle under his arm, wrapped his cloak about him, and blew out the candle. Groping his way to the ladder, he stumbled down it and out into the lane. It was but a short walk to Preston's quarters, a house which, in the dark—for thick clouds now hid the moon and stars—was almost concealed from view by trees. As Gray made his way to the door, he dropped his bundle at the foot of one of these trees, where he could find it easily. He went boldly to the door and delivered Tarleton's letter and message.

Then he hastened to find his bundle, and with it retired into the neighboring hedge. There he changed his clothing, leaving his uniform and coming out on the street as a civilian.

He walked rapidly until he came to a large house, from one or two windows of which a dim light came. It stood some distance back from the road, and there was a hedge with a gate in it,

and from it a gravel path led through a lawn to the door. Gray went up to the gate and carefully pushed it open. He passed through the opening, and the gate swung to behind him with a crash. Instantly, somewhere in the darkness ahead, Gray heard a musket cocked, and a stern voice cried, "Who goes there?" He dropped to his knees and worked cautiously toward the grass at the right of the path. He could not hear the one who had challenged him, but he was afraid that his own movements, cautious as they were, would betray him. He succeeded in reaching the grass, however, and laid himself down close to the hedge. The same voice cried again: "Who goes there?" and the questioner came down the path, the gravel crunching under his feet. At the gate he halted, and Gray could have touched him as he stood there with musket at "ready." For an instant Gray thought of grappling with him, but fear that in the struggle the musket might go off and give an alarm restrained him. The man was one of Tarleton's dragoons, Gray could see, and was evidently a sentinel. He was not particularly courageous, for, after standing a moment, he muttered:

"It's a lonesome place. But I guess it must have been a dog." With that he turned and walked up the path. Gray waited a few moments, then rose and went slowly and cautiously around to the back of the house. There he knocked at a small door, and was at once admitted by an old negress, who appeared to know him well. She conducted him up-stairs to the drawing-room, dimly lighted by a few candles on the centre-table. Asking him to wait, she withdrew, and for a moment all was silent. Then Gray heard a rustle of skirts, and the next instant the girl, whose picture he had gazed on in the loft came into the room.

"Dorothy!" he cried, holding out his arms.

"Good evening, Robert," she said, going to him, but skilfully avoiding his embrace by taking both his hands.

"I did not expect you. Every night for two weeks you have said you could not get leave and would not call again without it. Do you know you are very foolish to come this way, particularly without your uniform? There is a sentinel outside who might have shot you."

"Well, what if he had?"

"Robert," she answered, reproachfully, "you should not say that;" and her eyes filled with tears.

"Forgive me, dear. I wouldn't hurt you for the world. I came past him in safety."

"If only mamma had not insisted on having him, just because Clara and I were to be alone to-night. But never mind that. Tell me what you've been doing since you were here last. Why, I haven't seen you since last night."

"No, and it seems a year to me."

"Does it? You poor boy! Well, come here and sit beside me and tell me everything." She took his hand and led him to a sofa.

Gray paused a long time before replying. Finally, he said: "Dorothy, I must tell you something to-night. Do you remember how we played together as children, and how we loved each other even then? Do you remember that you promised to be my wife?"

"Yes, dear," she answered, quietly.

"Well, little girl, I must tell you something that may cause you to take back your promise, and it is almost harder than I can bear. Ten years ago I went to Paris. That was before the war began. As soon as I had news of the rebellion, I hastened to America and joined the army in New York."

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, the general honored me with his confidence, showed me great favor and sent me here."

"I shall love Clinton for that," said Dorothy, clasping her hands in delight.

"Clinton? No!"

"No?" echoed Dorothy.

"Not Clinton, but—" he hesitated a long moment—"Washington."

"Washington!" repeated the girl, in almost a scream. With a violent effort she controlled herself. She



looked steadily at him, then rose. "You are a rebel?"

"I am fighting for my country," he answered.

"Then what are you doing here? Are you a deserter, or are you—?" she stopped, choked, and could not go on. She stood for a moment silent, her hands clenched and her eyes on his; then, "For pity's sake," she cried, "say you are not a——"

Her voice rose almost to a shriek, but she checked herself suddenly, and murmured, "Hark! what is that?"

For a moment Gray could distinguish nothing. Then he heard the dull tramp of a body of soldiers gradually growing more distinct as the men came nearer. He could hear them open the gate, march up the path and answer the sentinel's challenge. Then some one uttered a sharp, "Halt!" and with a clicking and jangling of accoutrements the sounds ceased. In a moment some one pounded heavily on the door. The noise broke Dorothy's silence.

"They are coming in," she whispered; "soldiers! And they will find you here without your uniform. Quick! get out of the window."

Gray took her hand and led her to the window. He smiled at her, as he pointed to a figure walking to and fro in the shadow of the house.

Dorothy shrank back.

"Too late!" she murmured. "What shall I do, oh, what shall I do?"

"Do? Nothing, of course," Gray returned, placing her in a chair at the table and putting a book in her hand. "They are merely inspecting, probably. But I don't wish to be seen; I'll get behind the sofa."

But Dorothy looked at him with a great doubt in her eyes. "What if—?" she said; but Gray disappeared behind the high back of the sofa, and the old negress, trembling with fright, appeared in the doorway.

"De'se breakin' down de do'," she chattered, and, in fact, the knocks were shaking the house.

"Why don't you let them in, Clara?" asked her mistress, and with

a muttered, "Yas'm," Clara clattered off to open the door. The knocks ceased, a gruff voice gave orders, and heavy steps came up the stairs. In a moment more a burly sergeant appeared in the doorway.

"Beg pardon, Miss Jarvis," he said, saluting awkwardly; "I'm sorry to intrude, but I have orders to search Charleston. I know that you've stood for the old king and I won't detain you a minute. I don't think I'll find what I'm looking for here."

"What are you looking for?" asked the girl.

"A spy."

"A spy?" Dorothy started violently, but kept her eyes on the sergeant's face. She hesitated a moment, and then said, slowly, "No, I don't think you'll find him here. I and mine have always been loyal. You may search the house."

"Thank you, miss," returned the sergeant. He saluted again and went to the head of the staircase. From there he bawled out orders, and in a moment his men were running through every room.

Then Gray rose and went to Dorothy. She sat with wide-open, horror-stricken eyes fixed on the doorway.

"Dorothy!" he said, taking her hand. She snatched it back. "Don't you dare, sir!" she said, in a harsh voice and without looking at him. "To think that the man I loved should so meanly sacrifice his honor!"

"Dorothy," cried Gray, "I have kept my honor safe. Some may fight openly against the enemy, but others must fight in secret."

But the girl only shook her head. Gray knelt at her side and tried to kiss her lips, but she pushed him back. "Have you ceased to love me?" he asked, sadly.

"Love you?" she answered; "I despise you!"

With a deep sigh, Gray rose to his feet. "I feared it," he said. "My work is done, and to-night I came to say good-bye, before leaving to join my friends. The war will soon

be over and I had hoped to find you waiting for me at the end. I thought that I had sacrificed everything for my country, but it seems she calls for one more offering upon her altar. I must give it."

"I can never forgive you," said Dorothy, still hard and cold.

"Good-bye, sweetheart," said Gray, and he kissed her hand.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To bury my life under the ashes of your love," he answered, turning toward the door. The sergeant at that moment returned. He stared curiously at Gray and then turned his eyes on Dorothy.

"We've found no one," said he. "I beg pardon, miss—this gentleman—if he is a friend of yours, of course it's all right. If not— Is he your friend?" he asked, suddenly.

Dorothy looked at the sergeant fixedly. Her face became ghastly in its paleness and her lips trembled.

"No," she said, in so low a tone that the sergeant could hardly hear her.

"No?" he inquired. She nodded. "Then I must search him."

"I'll save you the trouble, sergeant," said Gray; "I am the man you want, I think."

The sergeant looked at him closely. "I know you," he said; "you are Corporal Gray."

"Yes. Sergeant Dundas, isn't it?"

"I don't want you," said Dundas. "I'm looking for a spy."

"Then you do want me."

Dundas gazed intently at him for a moment, and then, "So?" he said, slowly.

"Here," answered Gray, handing him the miniature-case.

Dorothy looked at it, and shivered. The sergeant took it from Gray's hand and examined it closely. He saw the new stitches, ripped them and drew out the papers. He glanced at them hurriedly and placed them in his belt. Then he said:

"I suppose you are ready?"

"Yes," answered Gray.

"My orders were to shoot you at once."

"Will you permit me to have that picture?"

"Certainly," and the sergeant gave it back.

Gray placed it in his breast. "Thanks, sergeant. A moment, and I am at your service." He went over to Dorothy. She sat as in a stupor. He took her face in his hands and kissed her on the forehead.

"Good-bye, my love," he whispered. He walked to the door. "Now, sergeant, if you please."

"After you, sir," said Dundas, bowing.

They went out and down the stairs. There Dundas gathered his men. Gray took off his coat and hat, and they bound his arms at the elbows. Quietly and solemnly they marched around to the back of the house. There was a great tree directly before Dorothy's window, and against its trunk they placed him. The firing party took its station near the house wall, and Dundas advanced to Gray.

"Sergeant, how beautiful it is! It is a pleasure to die on such a night."

"Do you wish a priest?" asked Dundas.

Gray shook his head. "I need no one to teach me how to die," he said.

"Good-bye," said Dundas, suddenly putting out his hand. They shook hands as well as the prisoner's bonds would permit.

Dundas stepped back. Gray raised his eyes, and they fell full on Dorothy leaning far out over the window-sill.

Her face was drawn with anguish. He knew she could see him, for the clouds had passed and moonbeams played upon him. He saw her stretch her arms toward him, and heard her say:

"Robert, forgive! I—love—you."

"Dear Dorothy!" he answered, with a smile.

At that moment the soldiers fired, and, still smiling, he fell toward her arms.

## FORBIDDEN SPEECH

THE passion you forbade my lips to utter  
Will not be silenced. You must hear it in  
The sullen thunders when they roll and mutter,  
And when the tempest nears, with wail and din,  
I know your calm forgetfulness is broken,  
And to your heart you whisper, "*He has spoken!*"

All Nature understands and sympathizes  
With human passion. When the restless sea  
Turns in its futile search for peace, and rises  
To plead and to pursue, it speaks for me.  
And with each desperate billow's anguished fretting  
Your heart must tell you, "*He is not forgetting!*"

When unseen hands in lightning strokes are writing  
Mysterious words upon a cloudy scroll,  
Know that my pent-up passion is inditing  
A cypher message for your woman's soul.  
And when the lawless winds rush by you, shrieking,  
Let your heart say, "*Now his despair is speaking!*"

Love comes nor goes at beck or call of reason;  
Nor is Love silent, though it says no word.  
By day or night, in any clime or season,  
A dominating passion must be heard.  
So shall you hear, through Junes and through Decembers,  
The voice of Nature saying, "*He remembers!*"

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

## RIVALS

FLORA—Fred says that I am the only girl who can make him happy.  
LENA—Poor fellow! He must be miserable.

## WITH NAUGHT BETWEEN

DAME RUMOR vows Dolly and I are to wed,  
But I meet the mild charge with a shake of the head,  
And I say to my friendly accusers, with glee,  
"There is nothing at all between Dolly and me!"

If a glimpse you could steal of us sometimes, I know,  
Side by side on the sofa, the lights very low,  
You would willingly with my assertion agree:  
"There is nothing at all between Dolly and me!"

ROY FARRELL GREENE.

## HER GOWN

TONIGHT, while I still remember  
That beauty is not for long,  
That May's half-way to December,  
I'll weave you a gown of song.

I'll pluck you a wreath of roses  
From the rare old garden of rhyme;  
I'll gather a garland of posies  
That will last to the end of time.

And there, on your dainty fingers,  
I'll place some couplets of rings,  
In which the melody lingers  
That is heard when a poet sings.

I'll sprinkle your hair with kisses  
That are jewels expressed in words;  
I'll clasp round your neck the blisses  
That are found in the songs of birds.

And your little feet on the fender  
I'll put in a metre divine;  
For I am your love, so tender,  
And you are that wife of mine.

TOM HALL.



## VOX, ET PRÆTEREA NIHIL

MRS. HATTERSON—The ladies of the parish got up a baby show for the  
benefit of the hospital.

MRS. CATTERSON—Was it a success?

"Oh, a howling success."



## HUMANE

PATIENT—Doctor, suppose this operation isn't a success?

DOCTOR (*cheerfully*)—Well, I'm going to give you enough ether so you will  
never know the difference.



CLARA—I have an idea that he is really in love with me.

MAUD—Why don't you marry him and teach him better?

# AN EASY VICTIM

By Herbert Grissom

**SCENE I.**—*The breakfast-room of the DUCKSON-DRAKES. MRS. DUCKSON-DRAKES, who is beautiful enough to be pretty in the morning, at one end of table; Mr. DUCKSON-DRAKES, wearing an unbecoming air of settled despair, at the other. Time, a Monday morning.*

MR. DUCKSON-DRAKES (*in sepulchral tones, as he contemplates an open letter*)—Kate, how would you like to spend the Winter in a tent?

MRS. DUCKSON-DRAKES (*insulting a fat pug by offering him plain muffin*)—Mercy on us! What an idiotic question! Has the omelet gone to your head?

MR. D.-D. (*with some appearance of the tragic*)—Well, the blow has fallen! George Gordon says in this letter that I must pay the notes and the interest on the mortgages, or he will foreclose next week.

MRS. D.-D.—Dear! dear! What impetuosity! The money is not more than a year past due.

MR. D.-D.—Evidently a thought of Gordon's. He says he dislikes to press a masculine friend, but adds the justly famous statement that, "business is business."

MRS. D.-D. (*placating the pug with a lump of sugar*)—And if he forecloses—?

MR. D.-D.—If he forecloses, we shall be enthusiastic candidates for dinner invitations, with the privilege of staying for breakfast. In other words, we are on our last legs, financially, with nowhere to sit down. We are paupers, in fact.

MRS. D.-D.—Really, this is serious!

Fancy breaking up, when we've just found such a jewel of a cook! If George Gordon is really in earnest, something must be done.

MR. D.-D.—If he's really in earnest—and he has the symptoms—something undoubtedly will be done. As for us, I can't see anything—

MRS. D.-D.—You seldom can, so early in the day. But (*seriously*) it seems we're in desperate straits. Of course, we can't think of calmly accepting poverty—

MR. D.-D. (*driveling*)—"Some are born poor, some achieve poverty, and some—"

MRS. D.-D.—Oh, hush—do! What do you think your chances would be to make a decent living in business?

MR. D.-D. (*turning pale*)—Pray, don't mention it! Great Scott, Kate! you surely don't expect me to work? Why, if there were no other reason, my engagements wouldn't permit.

MRS. D.-D. (*coldly*)—Of course, then, business is out of the question. Can you suggest something that wouldn't take any of your time, or fatigue you too greatly?

MR. D.-D. (*hesitatingly*)—Well, I have an idea; but—er—

MRS. D.-D.—But what? Out with it, before it gives you brain-fever.

MR. D.-D. (*with increasing hesitation*)—But I don't know—er—whether it would exactly meet with your approval.

MRS. D.-D.—Are you contemplating burglary, forgery, or something of that sort? If so, don't hesitate on my account.

MR. D.-D.—Absurd! No; the fact is—well—(*rings for whiskey and seltzer*)



you know that Gordon admires you greatly; he always has, and never overlooks an opportunity to make love to you——

Mrs. D.-D.—Well?

Mr. D.-D. (*pouring out a long one*)—Well, couldn't you—that is—don't you think it probable that you could influence him to——

Mrs. D.-D. (*contemplating him with an uncomfortable stare*)—Has it occurred to you how I could best accomplish it?

Mr. D.-D.—Why—er—you might encourage him in being attentive to you—just enough, you know; nothing serious——

Mrs. D.-D.—And at the proper moment, I suppose, you would rush in with a large carving-knife and threaten to probe him if he didn't cancel the notes and mortgages?

Mr. D.-D. (*hastily*)—Oh, I don't mean that, exactly. But you women understand how to make a monkey of a man——

Mrs. D.-D.—Sometimes they require no assistance. Well, it seems to rest with me whether we are to have anything in the future to eat and wear.

Mr. D.-D. (*pouring another long one*)—And drink. Doubtless you'll see him at the Bigges' dinner to-night. Meanwhile, I'll run over to Philadelphia for a couple of days, and see if I

can't blarney your Uncle Henry once more. Really, Kate, you needn't hesitate; it's very simple, if you don't mind it.

Mrs. D.-D. (*cheerfully*)—Oh, I don't mind it! On the contrary——

Mr. D.-D. (*eying her sharply*)—I say, Kate, you must keep a tight rein on Gordon; he's no slow coach.

Mrs. D.-D. (*placidly*)—I know.

Mr. D.-D. *frowns heavily, empties the seltzer-siphon at the fat pug and departs.* Mrs. D.-D. *remains, gazing steadily into space.*

SCENE II.—*The DUCKSON-DRAKE'S dining-room. Time, the following Wednesday evening.*

*Enter Mr. D.-D., who seems surprised at not finding Mrs. D.-D. present. Advances to table, where he finds letter addressed to himself. Reads:*

DEAR TOM:

Your plan worked beautifully. Really, it was too easy. Enclosed you will find your notes and release for the mortgages. George and I sail this (Wednesday) afternoon for—well, Arcady. I hope this narrow escape from penury will be a great immoral lesson to you. Take good care of the cook.

KATHERINE.

(*This is merely the beginning of the scene that ensues, but it is perhaps better to drop the curtain here.*)



## JASMINE

I ENVIED my sweet flower lying  
Upon a breast more sweet and fair,  
And it with envy, too, was dying,  
To find its charms transcended there.

When morning came the flower was missing,  
Its bloom and beauty vanished quite.  
I envy still; for it perished kissing  
Its life away on her bosom white.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.



HE—Are you fond of flowers?

SHE—Passionately. I can scarcely wait for Winter to come.

# HOT CINDERS IN COLD ASHES

By Flora Bigelow Dodge

“DINNER is served.” The announcement was received with a sense of relief by the house-party assembled in the big hall of Elm Court. They had been waiting half an hour for the Duchess of Lyons.

She came down the winding staircase just at that moment, a vision of loveliness, in her clinging white gown with long, filmy sleeves shivering in the current of air behind her.

“I am afraid I am always just a little late,” she said, in the sweetest voice possible. Then she took her host’s arm and they led the way in to dinner.

“I am sure it does not matter in the least,” said Mr. Bryce, struggling with a momentary desire to choke her. It would not have taken much strength to choke her, he reflected, as they seated themselves.

Her throat was long and slim, like some bird’s, and she had great, pitiful eyes, like those of a deer. One always seemed to look into them.

On the left of Mr. Bryce sat the Honorable Mrs. Hogue, who invariably confided to her latest and most intimate friend that, while she did not absolutely dislike Americans, for she knew some who were both nice and useful, she could not but feel that they were utterly lacking in caste. To do her justice, she bravely overcame the feeling and accepted every invitation from the Bryces which she could obtain. Perhaps brokers were an exception, after all. She had made a great deal of money through the tips Mr. Bryce had given her, and was planning extensive alterations at her country

place; and she was paying bills—a thing she had not done for at least six years. It did seem rather a waste of money to pay old bills, instead of buying something she really needed. But some of the tradespeople were becoming, as she said, “tiresome,” and, having the money, she had not the moral courage to ignore any longer their repeated demands.

The duchess looked about the table, observing the Elm Court house-party with a feeling of mild disappointment. She had not hoped for “Indians or niggers,” but certainly for something more interesting than the remains of the London season that she saw everywhere she went.

She soon discovered, however, that she had overlooked one face. A man never would have passed it without looking again, though it was little more than a child’s.

“Do tell me, Lord Hetherington, who that girl is just opposite, half-hidden behind the orchids; the girl in white muslin. She looks like an angel—so out of place among all of us here.”

Her remark was followed by a little rippling laugh.

His lordship lifted his monocle and carefully surveyed the girl in question. Then he turned to the duchess, and said: “By Jove! she *is* quite lovely. I wonder if that is the impecunious Southern relative that I heard was living with the Bryces. I’ll ask Lady Glyn-Thule.”

Lord Hetherington carried on a conversation with his other neighbor in an undertone for a moment. “Now I can tell you all about her,” he said, turning to the duchess. “She is Miss

Betty Sturgis, from South Carolina. She's seventeen, an orphan, living with a maiden aunt on a plantation down among the darkies and cotton fields. She has come to England recently to spend the Winter and Spring with her other aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Bryce. She is poor and well-bred, as you see; rather delicate and has, I believe, a wonderful contralto voice. And she's inclined to be religious and good."

"How lonely she must feel here. I am longing to meet her; she is so different."

Then she turned toward her host. "I am so interested in your niece, Mr. Bryce. How I should like to paint her! I don't know when I have ever seen such a beautiful head."

"You don't say so!" said Mr. Bryce, delightedly. "Betty is a good little girl, but I never thought her so pretty, myself. I suppose I remember the mother as being so much more beautiful that it takes the wind out of the child's sails. You would not think I could have such a lovely sister after looking at me, would you? Her neighbor, Mr. Drake—what's left of him after Spion Kop—seems to be of your way of thinking, doesn't he? Did you notice how he looked at her then?"

The Honorable Henry Drake's face, cold as it certainly was, seemed to be melting beneath the influence of this Carolina blossom that had been transplanted over to England. He watched her as a boy does a new toy, whose mechanism he cannot quite understand. He was only ten years her senior, but he seemed older, owing to African suns and winds. His right arm was in a sling.

He had not the slightest intention of letting Mr. Hogue talk to her any longer than he could help. Married men nowadays got too many innings with girls, he thought.

He asked her all sorts of questions about her home, infatuated by her answers, in her Southern intonation.

Betty Sturgis's skin was fair, with a child's frail coloring. The golden curls were drawn unwillingly back

from the small face, and pinned low at the neck as if she knew they would rebel at the slightest provocation.

The limpid blue eyes were strangely thoughtful for her years, deep-set and almost stern in their purity. The mouth was a little large and too full to be in harmony with the rest of her face. In her mouth one felt the promise of her possibilities; in her eyes one saw what she was now.

She was dressed in a plain white muslin gown. A black velvet sash with long trailing ends was tied about her waist. Her figure was rounded, her throat full.

"And do you skate, as well as ride?" asked Henry Drake, lowering his head nearer to hers.

"No, indeed! Where would we get the ice down on the plantation?"

"Oh, I forgot. Well, what do you do with yourself all the time? You say you have no neighbors within ten miles?"

"What do I do? Oh, I don't know; let's see. I study with Aunt Belinda in the morning, for about an hour. She lives with me, you know. In that time she has taught me all she can spare at once. Then she has to go and study up for the next day."

"But why does not your Aunt Belinda get you a governess, since her teaching you seems such a— a mental strain on her?" he suggested.

"Governess! Oh, she wouldn't allow that for anything in the world. She would be afraid of what else might be taught me besides lessons—all kinds of bad things and wickednesses."

Betty threw back her head and laughed, with irresponsible delight. "Then, after lessons, I ride and try to break the colts a little every day. We raise horses to sell, you know. Then I go round to the cabins and talk to the colored people, and they tell me all their little troubles. Then, I reckon, dinner-time comes along, and after that we take naps."

"What a funny idea! Do you really sleep?"

"Certainly. Then we go for a drive, aunty and I. She is nervous about

my driving, so we go in the Sunflower. It has yellow wheels and a brown body, and we use mules 'most always, because the man aunty was in love with used mules. She's so sentimental, aunty is!"

"Go on—do," he murmured, coaxingly, feeling a great longing to meet "aunty." "Have you pretty drives and good roads? What is the country like?"

"Oh, it's all sorts of red sand, pine trees and brooks and buzzards. Yes, it's pretty to me, because I was raised there, and in the Spring the jasmine smells so sweet. After our drive I sing to aunty before supper. She likes my songs, because the man she used to be in love with sang coon-songs to her 'most always."

"He was not colored, was he?" Henry Drake asked, in quite a changed tone.

"Colored! Dear me, no! He was a general, reared down in Carolina and killed in the war. She would not marry him, because grandma was a Quakeress and made her believe it was sinful to fight. I don't; I just love fighters." Her eyes rested a moment tenderly on his crippled arm, and she went on: "Poor aunty talks about him 'most every day when we go out carriage-riding. She doesn't tell much, but sort of recollects things, and begins, 'That reminds me when—' You know the kind of talk old people use."

"Yes, I know. Do you have high tea then?"

"Supper, you mean? Yes; usually on the piazza or in the front parlor, instead of the dining-room. Hoe-cake and 'Sally Lunn' and mush and tea—you know the kind of things I mean, that give people awful dreams if they aren't used to them? Then my old mammy comes for me, and I go to bed about nine or ten, after I have read to aunty for an hour from 'Pilgrim's Progress' or 'The Lives of the Saints.' Now, suppose *you* tell me something about yourself. Are you married?"

There was a perfect lack of shyness in

her manner; she possessed that freedom of manner peculiar to Southern women, however much they may have lived in seclusion.

"No, I am not married; I tried to be, and failed. But that was a long time ago. I see very little of women now. My life is given up to ambitions. I find them safer playmates than your sex." His voice turned hard as he spoke.

"I am sorry you don't like women," she said, gently; "because I liked you as soon as I looked at you. You seemed so honest, and I felt as if we would be friends."

He glanced at her suspiciously for an instant. Then his face softened, and he answered: "How nice of you! I believe we shall be friends. God knows we all have need of friends. Men can find wives and women lovers, but friends are few and far between. A woman offers a man her heart, and he claims only her body. Too late she finds her poor, lonely heart floating away into space. But I forgot I was talking to a girl; yet you are so strangely sympathetic I cannot believe you are only seventeen. Forgive me. We men grow careless in England. Shall I point out some of the people here to you? That lady who has been staring at you during dinner is the Duchess of Lyons, and one of the nicest women that ever lived; but she has aspirations to paint her friends, which is a trial, as her portraits take weeks of patient sittings. The next man is rather in love with her. He is Lord Hetherington. He rides well; that is about all I know of him. The lady on his right, with her dress too tight across her chest, is the Countess of Glyn-Thule. She is nicknamed 'the educator' in London because it is part of every young man's education to have an affair with her. She is not as young as she feels. She lives for flirting and bridge. I don't know the man next to her, but he is sure to be rich. Look at his nose; I think he refused the ham. The woman next him is interested in woman's rights and reforming morals. She will have a busy week here. Your neigh-

bor is known as the husband of Mrs. Hogue. His wife lives for the stock-exchange and racing, and does very well, for she pockets her gains and never pays her losses. Then come two or three more I don't know. Now, that next fellow is perhaps one of the most conspicuous men of the day. You see how Mrs. Powis is being thrilled by him. He is Percival Hutchins. He thinks himself the most brilliant young man in England, and I am inclined to agree with him. Just watch the other two people lean over to listen to his talk. They are absolutely absorbed, and how he loves the gallery!"

Percival Hutchins asked to meet Miss Sturgis as soon as the men had finished smoking. He endeavored, however, not to appear too anxious, and put on his most casual and bored manner when Mr. Drake brought him up. They exchanged a few platitudes, and he said, condescendingly: "I liked your country, Miss Sturgis; every one was most awfully kind to me; in fact, too kind. It annoys me to be persistently invited by people whom I have never met."

Betty's Southern blood was aroused. Men from her part of the world did not talk to women in that offhand manner. She answered proudly, her nostrils quivering: "Had they met you first, I am sure you would have received fewer invitations."

Hutchins shrugged his shoulders. "I had not heard you were such a wit, Miss Sturgis," he said.

"Pray take all the credit; it is you who have inspired me," she answered, dropping her eyes. The color fled from her face, leaving her very pale. Hutchins turned to console himself with the duchess, who was still laughing at him.

Betty went over to Mr. Drake. "Let us go into the conservatory," she said; "anywhere to get away from—the fire. It is so hot in here!"

"Miss Sturgis, I can hardly believe you have not been out in the world before. You have such perfect poise of manner. Just now you seemed trans-

formed. You are without shyness and talk as if you were used to ruling a salon. You were right to snub that fellow as you did. Come and sit down under this palm. It is very nice to get you off alone here. I wonder if you will be annoyed if I tell you something? I say it with all reverence: you remind me so much of the only woman I was ever in love with. It is six years since I last saw her."

Betty's blue eyes opened wide with sympathy. There was a little pause; then she said, in the sweetest voice imaginable, "How could you think that would annoy me? I am so, so glad!"

He watched her face with its rapid changes, with all the spirituality come back into it again.

"And why didn't you marry her?" she asked, promptly, as all unhappiness seemed to her quite unnecessary. It often does at her age.

"Because," he answered, bitterly, "there was a duke's eldest son in love with her, and I was only the second son of a peer at that time. Perhaps you don't know that in England the eldest son gets the estate, and the younger sons shift for themselves. I was a younger son, until my poor brother was killed in Africa two years ago, and now at my father's death I shall succeed to the property and title. In the meantime, Ivy has been married five years to the duke. She has had two children, and, I fancy, is contented enough with her life. My feelings are only cold ashes now, or I could not speak of this to you; but, all the evening, you have reminded me of her. It has carried me back and made me feel alive again."

"I think it is all dreadfully sad, but I would just like to see any one make me marry a man I didn't love. I reckon the girl can't be very much like me in her nature. I hope she is wretched now, for making you unhappy."

Drake threw back his head and laughed. "You are most sympathetic, but I sincerely hope that she is happy, that some day we will meet on a different basis and bury the past. But,



Miss Sturgis, your way of turning your head is so extraordinarily like hers, your complexion, your hair and eyes, every movement of your body, everything about you—except your mouth. Her lips were thinner and her mouth was——”

“Go on; you can say it—more beautiful.”

“No; less human.” He rose suddenly, and they went back to the drawing-room.

The next day was Sunday. After five-o'clock tea had been served in the great hall, the duchess asked if Betty would sing some of her coon-songs. She took the girl's hand and, in the tenderest, most caressing voice imaginable, said: “Dear Miss Sturgis, we did not like to bother you last night, but if you knew how we were longing to hear you sing!” And she turned her great, pitiful eyes on Betty, as if her last drop of blood depended on the song.

Betty looked over toward her aunt.

“Could I turn most of the lights out?” she said. “I like to play in the dark and imagine myself back on the old plantation.”

“Of course,” called out Lord Hetherington, settling himself on a cushion at the duchess's feet; “anything you like.”

Mr. Bryce turned out some of the lamps and lowered others. The girl walked meditatively to the piano in the corner and ran her fingers lightly over the keys, while she gazed at the ceiling as if to collect her thoughts.

There was a dead silence in the room. Her chords seemed to have hypnotized every one in the party. Then on their ears fell the wonderful, soft notes of her little plantation lullaby, and in the dim light one could imagine the young mother in the cotton fields, rocking her obstreperous little pickaninny to sleep; and one could almost see the hot glow of the setting sun falling across the dark cabin.

The plaintive notes rose and fell. When the song was ended Betty turned

toward her little audience. They would not let her rise.

“Go on,” said the duchess; “go on, I beg of you.”

Betty had a voice teeming with infinite pathos and gentleness; deep and soft. She had caught to perfection the break in certain notes peculiar to the negroes.

Then she sang the song of an old slave woman, whose husband had been sold many years before, one who, until the ebb of her life, had waited in vain for his return.

No one spoke for a moment, after the last note died away like a whisper among the ashes of the wood-fire. The duchess wiped her eyes. Percival Hutchins sat with his eyes tightly closed. The cuckoo clock broke the silence. Mrs. Bryce rose from the tea-table.

“I am afraid we must all go to dress for dinner; it is late and we need a little time to rest,” she said.

## II

WHEN Henry Drake left Elm Court a few mornings later, his feelings were most varied. He realized he would miss this young girl as he had missed only one woman in his life, until time, the great softener, had soothed him. He was not sure whether he had fallen in love with Betty, or whether it was only the memory of the other woman, now awakened by this wonderful likeness.

He counted the days to the first of March, when he should meet the little Southerner at “Shroone.” From London he sent her an enormous bunch of lilies to wear at the county ball. It had been very long since he had sent any woman flowers.

Betty lay awake half the night after he left, thinking about him. His personality was strangely attractive to her. His reserve and sudden bursts of frankness, which are so incongruous in the Englishman, charmed her as she had never been charmed before. He was so thoroughly a gentleman! Most

people liked him, that she saw plainly; but did any one know him really well? All she really knew of him was that he was one of the best shots in England; and that he never flirted with married women.

Poor child! She knew she liked him entirely too well; but, like most very young persons, she was satisfied with the intoxication of loving, without a thought of any return.

Betty gradually made more acquaintances, but to her nobody could compare with the Duchess of Lyons and Henry Drake; possibly it was because they were the first to be kind to her in a strange land.

When the time came for the Bryces to take Betty to "Shroone," Mrs. Bryce was ill with an attack of influenza; Mr. Bryce would not leave her. The duchess, however, came begging that Betty might be allowed to go alone with her maid, as Mr. Drake would take charge of her on the train going down.

It was a typical English day, drizzling and wet, when her uncle left her in Mr. Drake's hands at Euston Station; but the dampness made her skin brighter and her hair more curly. The dark-blue tailor serge she wore revealed the curves of her figure to perfection.

When they were shut into the compartment, which Mr. Drake had carefully reserved, he wrapped her feet in his mink rug, because it was warmer than hers, put her cushions behind her and brought her an armful of papers and magazines; but he gave her no time to look at one, as they had so much to talk about. Both were genuinely sorry when the journey came to its end.

Mr. and Mrs. Hogue, Lord Hetherington and one or two others had come by the same train. Occasional lights flickered through the cottage windows as they all drove into the park. The lodge was a long way from the house. Betty felt that, if she had not had Mr. Drake with her, she would have died of fright at the array of footmen, when the light from the

vast entrance blazed before her eyes and the huge carved doors were swung open.

As they reached the drawing-room, the duchess stepped forward from behind her tea-table to greet them. She kissed Betty tenderly, and said: "It was good of you to come alone, and I won't let you feel shy for a moment. Let me present you to some of the others."

Later the duke came in and asked to be presented to Betty. He was a small, pale man, very quiet and very shy.

When they had all assembled for dinner, Betty found, to her disgust, that Percival Hutchins had arrived on a later train.

"I don't know if you have met. Miss Sturgis, may I present Mr. Hutchins?" said the duke, who was standing near Betty at the time.

Hutchins put on his most blasé expression and made a bow.

Betty said, feebly: "Don't you remember? I think we met before at Elm Court, some weeks ago." She thought they might as well be friendly, now that her anger had subsided, although she was sure she never could like him. He shrugged his shoulders as he answered: "I remember only a very dull visit of two days."

In reality, he had forgotten that Mrs. Bryce was any relation of the girl to whom he was speaking. He meant to be clever, but the duke looked displeased.

Mrs. Hogue joined them at that moment, saying:

"From the expression on your faces, I do believe Percival has been making one of his incorrigible remarks. Percival, you really are not fit to be in the same house with young girls. Come over here and talk to me a moment. I have something particular to tell you."

Betty drew a breath of relief when he had gone.

The next few days sped fast and the week's end soon came.

Mr. Drake and most of the others were to move on somewhere else, but

Betty was to remain at "Shroone" a few days longer, with the family. The girl knew she was hopelessly in love. Drake, too, saw it; but was not confident enough to speak. He was as honest with himself as with others. He had passed the great passion of his life, and now it was wonderful to feel that some one really loved him. His great admiration and respect for Betty made him realize his own possibilities as he had never done before. Her spiritual beauty was a revelation to him. A woman with such a face should be worshiped, not loved, he said to himself.

He grew to talk to her freely about himself, and Betty understood perfectly what was in his mind. He was fonder of her than of any one else, but he was not in love.

The evening before Henry Drake was to leave, he took Betty in to play billiards after tea. He delighted in teaching her the game. As they passed the post-table, he gathered up a handful of letters.

"Forgive me, if I glance over the envelopes. Bills, invitations, begging," he murmured, as he scanned the letters, surmising their contents. He paused to look hard at the last. It had a black border and was sealed with a big coronet. He turned it over in his fingers several times; then he pushed all the letters hurriedly into his pocket.

He played his game badly, and his pupil beat him. She suggested stopping after one game, to go up and rest before dinner, hoping he would detain her, but he only said, "You are right," and before she had left the room took out his letters to read.

When Betty came down to dinner that night, her face was transfigured. She was, for the first time, absolutely beautiful. She sat at the duke's left and listened attentively to his political views.

Betty carefully avoided Mr. Drake's eyes during dinner, but her task was difficult, for he never stopped looking at her for a moment. By the time he was eating his salad, he was con-

vinced that his first love was only a memory and that the dead ashes contained no hot cinders. He resolved to propose to Betty before he left, and while the fruit was being served he almost showed some feeling in his face. He took her into the conservatory as soon as he could after the men came in from smoking.

"Betty," he began, without any preliminary warning, "I never could lie to a woman. I have told you of my life and its disappointments and my buried love-affair. I recalled it to-night, as I have received a long letter from the Duchess of Acres, whom I have not seen or written to for six years—since she married and went to live in Ireland. I had heard her husband died a few weeks ago, and now she writes, asking me to meet her in London next week. She wishes to see me for some reason, and if I can be of service to her I will; but I wish to tell her that I am engaged to the best and sweetest woman in the whole world—to you, Betty. May I tell her that I love you and wish you to become my wife?"

He caught her two little cold hands in his as he spoke.

She dropped her eyes, and the lids quivered nervously for a moment before she looked again into his face. "I am so afraid you think you are in love with me because—because—I remind you of her—the girl you were in love with, the Duchess of Acres," she said, faintly.

"It was so at first, dear. That drew me toward you; but then I grew to care for you for yourself. I waited to speak until I was perfectly sure, and I tell you honestly it was not because I felt I ought to propose to you." The girl shivered. He continued: "In the end, I think that the cruelest thing a man can do. I should even tell a woman if I were tired of her and wished my engagement broken."

"Would you, truly?"

"Yes. I should prefer a woman to do it with me, too. I have no reason to marry except for love. I

loved once, and now—I worship." He bowed his head and kissed her hands, reverently.

"But I would rather be loved than worshipped," she said, archly.

He laughed. "If a man worships a woman before he loves her, it is the seal for eternity."

Her head was close to his and the blood surged up to her face. He looked to see if they were unobserved. Then he kissed her.

"Betty, I can't tell you how I value that kiss; I feel that you never have touched a man's lips before. I shall never forget it."

"I have never been engaged before," she answered, simply.

"Now we are to be married. Bother it! I wish I did not have to leave here to-morrow. I have half a mind not to go to Lady Glyn-Thules's party, but I——"

"No," interrupted Betty; "go, at least for a while, until I get used to everything."

"But I am longing to announce our marriage."

"Please don't. I am engaged to you on one condition; that is, if you bore me, in a few weeks, I shall tell you; and if I bore you, you will tell me."

Here they were interrupted by Mrs. Hogue and Percival Hutchins, who were trying to find two more people to act charades.

### III

THE Duchess of Acres went very quietly to a little hotel in Curzon street, after her husband's funeral, with her five-year-old son and her baby. She had not been in London since her marriage, except for a few days at a time, when she wished to shop. The duke was always in poor health and never could stop there long, and she was not allowed to leave him. He hated traveling and they lived an isolated life on their estate in Ireland, and were always a little pinched for ready money.

He allowed her to entertain but very little, as he considered English society immoral. He was fond of his young wife; she had brought him an heir and a son for the army.

Before the flowers had time to blossom on her husband's grave, the duchess wrote Henry Drake and was keener to see him again in London than he knew.

Ivy, Duchess of Acres, had thoroughly enjoyed being called, "your grace," during those six years, but now she felt the need of other things.

She stood looking out of the window twenty minutes before he came. He was late. It was foggy and dark outside, and the street lamps were lighted.

There was a knock at the door, and Mr. Drake was announced. He felt his head swim for a moment, but said, carelessly, "London has given you rather a nasty welcome. It was a different sort of morning that we rode in the Row together—let me see, many years ago now—how many?"

He shook hands with her and looked about the room. She scanned his face, eagerly. His figure was superb now. He had seemed quite a boy when they parted. He was several shades darker, and his sun-burned mustache was much lighter than his hair.

It was pleasant for her to think that she had been the love of Henry Drake's life. She wished to bring him back, and was counting the weeks until she could indulge in a little mild gaiety. She longed to meet the prominent people of the day, and who could help her better than her old lover? Like many English women, she was better-looking at twenty-six than she had been at twenty. The late duke had given her approval and affection, but never confidence and admiration; and now she was bent on getting the latter.

Drake sat down by the tea-table and watched the kettle boil; but he stole glances at her beautiful face.

Her figure had improved wonderfully; her head was set well back on her full, round throat, which was per-

haps her greatest beauty, and she seldom covered it with more than a bit of lace and her matchless pearls. Motherhood had given her skin a richer bloom. She was a superb, domesticated animal now; a material duplicate of Betty Sturgis, without the young girl's spirituality.

He asked her about the children and Irish industries with an equal indifference, and listened to her rambling on about her life in her cheery, soft voice, and, although nothing very interesting was said, he was surprised to find it was after seven when he took up his hat and cane to leave.

"Are you going so soon?" she asked, plaintively, with a flattering accent on the last word. "You have told me nothing of yourself yet; but perhaps you are dining early, and I must not detain you."

"No," he answered, shaking out his gloves, "I am not dining anywhere; I only thought I had paid you rather a long call. Are you dining alone?"

She nodded. "Yes; will you stop and take your chances with me—roast fowl and swimming Brussels sprouts? Such thoroughly British food one gets here! But I don't mind, for the rooms are comfortable, and they all know me. Besides that, I am hard up." She shrugged her shoulders carelessly with the last remark, and even laughed a bit.

His eyes went over her again for an instant. She was one of those women who always look rich and luxurious. She was frank about her economies, however, which were less conspicuous than her debts. She talked on, and once touched on their past; but she saw that he drew back a little, as if even the memory hurt him. He enjoyed his bad dinner immensely and moved his place next to hers.

The room was full of the scent of the lilies at her breast. She had stirred the fire in his veins, and he realized he was not old enough to be happy in just being loved; he wanted to love. But did he love her? He asked himself the question, looking straight into her eyes. Before he had

time to come to any mental conclusion, she said, laying her useless little hand timidly on his knee:

"Harry—may I call you that, as I used to?—you will be kind to me, won't you, now that I am all alone in the world and have no man to lean on? It is so hard for me, with two boys to bring up, and you will stop in to-morrow, if you can, about tea-time, like a dear?"

"Of course; but you don't mean me to go home yet, surely! It is not ten o'clock."

She blushed charmingly, and now she looked like Betty!

"Yes, Harry, you must go now, because I have to be massaged at ten o'clock, before I go to sleep. I am rather done up, after all I have been through. I quite forgot when I asked you to stop to dine that I was engaged—that I was to be massaged later. I am sure you won't mind; you are always so sympathetic! Go, now, dear, because I have to be ready promptly."

She rose and laid her hand in his. He felt he was dismissed, and said good night; but, as he passed out through the office, he thought he heard a very smart-looking man ask to be shown up to the Duchess of Acres's apartment. His back was turned, so he could not distinguish him. Possibly his ears had played him false. He walked home across Piccadilly and down St. James's street with his hat thoughtlessly pushed to the back of his head, his cane tucked under his arm and his hands shoved deep into his pockets. He was suddenly surprised on finding himself at his rooms.

The Winter passed quickly. Betty made one or two more visits with her aunt and uncle, and enjoyed the season tremendously. She seldom saw Henry Drake, as he went about a great deal. He wrote her weekly letters, saying where he had been, but very little of whom he had seen.

Betty shared her secret with no one. She wished to be quite sure of Henry Drake, to make it easier for him to keep his word to her, in case he dis-



covered he had not known his own mind. She had a morbid dread of being deceived by any man.

It was the last day of April now, and Mrs. Bryce had arranged a week-end party before going up to London. Henry Drake was invited.

"I think you rather like him, Betty," said her aunt, in her slow, nasal tone.

"Yes, indeed," said the girl, frankly, "best of all."

"Now, honey, don't get too interested, because he has been in love with a woman for more than seven years, and she is now a widow, and I hear he is with her almost all the time, and is probably going to marry her."

"I hope he does, if he loves her," answered Betty. "Do you know her, aunt? I don't see that he could do better than marry the Duchess of Acres. But she's a silly woman, I'm afraid, and would not appreciate him."

Betty closed her eyes. Mrs. Bryce did not notice her, for she was looking out of the window across the lawn and river.

The lovely Spring weather and the late twilight made it possible for the guests at Elm Court to saunter out of doors after tea. Betty and Henry Drake were the first to disappear behind the big rhododendron bushes in the garden. She tripped gaily along beside him, her long white gown rustling over the grass as she moved.

He talked to her of himself. Then he watched her quietly, as she told him all she had been doing. He noticed how ethereal she seemed, and how her golden curls nestled to the skin of her brow and neck, as if they loved it. Her eyes danced with the vitality of youth, and her lips trembled with the sensitiveness of love.

As Henry Drake wandered with her through the garden, he remembered the promise they had made to each other when they were at Elm Court many months before. He had said he would tell her, if his feeling toward her changed. He tried now to frame the words.

"You will forgive me, Betty," he began, slowly, "for appearing brutal; but—but—I don't love you as I feel I should—to marry you. I could marry you and make you happy, if you felt you needed me, but you are so different from other women, that I think I would only make you miserable, if I did not give you all I ought to give. Betty, have you ever stirred up cold ashes and found live cinders?—cinders that would burn your fingers? Do you understand me?"

He waited a moment for her ever-ready sympathy. She raised her wonderful eyes to his face, and he saw that she understood; but she did not speak at once. The blossoms seemed to be listening for her answer. At last, when her lips moved, her voice sounded as if it came from some far-off world.

"Henry, I love you so much—and I wish you to be happy. I have all I ask for—your trust and friendship."

He bowed his head, and she continued, softly: "I am so grateful to you for coming to me and telling me—so grateful, Henry! It is much better than to have found it out too late!"

"Betty, you are an angel! I hate myself, and yet—oh, Betty!" Real emotion seemed to overcome him. They were both silent for a time, and then he said to her: "I have not asked Ivy to be my wife—yet. I feel sure she still cares for me, and she has shown me plainly that all I need is to ask for her love. But I could not speak to her, until I had asked your permission and your blessing on our marriage. I don't quite know what my feeling is. I never miss her when I am away from her, and I do miss you, Betty. Yet when I am with her I want to possess her. I want her for my home, for my wife. I hate other men that hang about her, and yet I do not think my nature is really jealous. I don't really know what it is; I am only telling you what I feel, as if I were talking to myself."

"I understand, dear, perfectly," she murmured. "Go and win her now. Playing with dead ashes is dangerous, Henry. I only ask you not to tell her

—about me. But let me be a friend to you, dear.”

He took her hand for a moment, and they watched the sunset over the rhododendron bushes. “It looks like rain to-morrow,” said Betty, suddenly.

“It looks like heaven,” said Henry Drake, absently.

#### IV

IN another month, many people had come up to London. The Duchess of Acres had taken a small house in Bolton street, and, although she could not attend formal affairs, she enjoyed having two or three people drop in to dine or lunch; the old atmosphere of gaiety was a delight to her. She reveled in the passers-by staring at her as she drove in her victoria up and down Piccadilly and through the Park at six.

Henry Drake made an engagement to walk with Ivy in Hyde Park one morning, and determined to propose to her, he accepted and fix their wedding day.

They watched the riders a while, leaned over the rails and talked to a few mutual friends, fed the pigeons and then settled themselves in penny chairs, a little back from the throng of people, under a sheltering tree. She traced her name in the gravel with the point of her parasol, and he lighted a cigarette.

“Ivy,” he began, in a very serious tone, “Ivy, I want you to marry me.”

But she laughed carelessly. “It wouldn’t be decent—not for a long time; his people would be furious with me. You know I care for you, though, Harry, and you only.”

“I know,” he answered, simply.

“But you know what I mean. It would seem odd; poor, dear Snuffy has not been dead a year.”

“I am not trying to persuade you to marry me to-morrow; we could wait. Just promise me that you will—later.”

She erased the “Ivy” again with her parasol, peevishly, and said: “Oh, Harry, you have no more sentiment

than—I don’t know what. This is not the time or place to talk of that sort of thing. I feel hot and commonplace; let us change the subject, just until we get out of the Park. Wait until we get home. By the way, I want to show you an anonymous letter I got about you. It rather amused me and put you in a new light.”

With great difficulty, she extracted from the depths of her pocket a note, which she threw into his hands, and went on laboriously with her name, begun in a fresh bit of gravel.

He leaned forward to read it.

MY DEAR IVY:

I appreciate all your kindness and offers, but I don’t think you had better count on me, as I am afraid I am not a marrying man. However, I will let you know definitely in a few days. I am ambitious and selfish, as you know. I value the high esteem in which you hold me, but I think you had better link your life with Drake. It will be a less stormy career than a life with me, and, although I think him a bore, he has fine qualities and his place does not need repairs, as mine does. My wife must have a bottomless purse, unless she is a tinker, gardener and plumber combined. Plowton Hall is leaking everywhere, and just being a duchess will not stop water from trickling in. You are a great darling, but we had better simply keep on as we are now.

Your *bien dévoué*,

PERCIVAL HUTCHINS.

For a moment Henry Drake thought all the people were riding upside down. The duchess did not remember that she had slipped two notes in her pocket. He folded the letter deliberately and handed it back to her without any change of expression. She spoke first.

“Do you believe the woman with the blue eyes was the one you were supposed to love, or the black-eyed one, with the green hat? It is a killing letter, I think. You, of all people, Harry, who are so proper! How I have laughed at it!”

“Oh, the black-eyed one in the green hat is rather more my style,” he answered, mechanically.

“That’s what I thought. I knew the man who wrote the letter meant that one and tried to make me

miserable. But why did he not sign his name, do you suppose?"

Henry Drake was looking vacantly across the Serpentine, and did not answer.

"Don't look so blank, Harry. Why do you suppose he did not sign his name?"

"Forgot, I suppose," he answered, vaguely.

"Forgot his own name! Really, you are odd to-day. Come, let us walk back to the house."

When they arrived at her door in Bolton street, he looked at his watch and said he did not have time to go in, because he was lunching at one. So they parted, and she wondered at the strange friends he had who lunched at that hour.



## A MYSTERY

HIS mouth was large and his nose not straight,  
 His eyes were a washed-out blue,  
 His ears stuck far from a pear-like pate,  
 His hair was a carrotty hue.  
 An insignificant, gimcrack man,  
 Comical, quaint, *outré*,  
 Built on a wondrously homely plan  
 From the odds and ends of clay.

And the people mocked, but—Love took part,  
 The mischievous, kindly elf,  
 And threw a glamour by subtle art  
 Known just to his cunning self.  
 Then, sudden, a woman, regal, tall,  
 Sprang close to the scarecrow's side—  
 "Indeed, he's the handsomest man of all  
 In the whole, whole world!" she cried.

EDWIN L. SABIN.



## UNINTERESTING

MISS SUMMIT—Did you have a nice time abroad?

MISS PALISADE—No. I was with a man who did nothing all the time but study his guide-book and talk about the places we were in.



## A POOR SHOW

"HOW was the funeral?"  
 "Oh, nothing to brag of. They never were much."

# THE STARVELING

A TRAGEDY AFTER MAETERLINCK

By William C. de Mille

## CHARACTERS:

THORON, *Count of Lachmia.*

LAMBERT, *his friend.*

PHILMA, *wife of Thoron.*

BROLLO, *a child, son of Thoron and Philma.*

THREE ARMLESS MEN.

SCENE I—*A rocky pass in the mountains. At centre of stage a huge rock rises into the air. On one side of the stage the sun is shining brightly; on the other it is night and a thunderstorm is raging. Enter THORON and LAMBERT.*

THORON

Good-bye, Lambert. Remember, I leave my wife in your care.

LAMBERT

Have you no fear, Thoron?

THORON

Nay; do I not know all?

LAMBERT

All—save one thing.

THORON

Do not speak it here. The thunder will drown your voice.

LAMBERT

Come into the sunshine.

*(They cross into the light.)*

THORON

Now, speak.

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LAMBERT

Nay; in the light I have forgotten what I wished to say.

THORON

Then, once more, farewell!

LAMBERT

When do you return?

THORON

I come when I am needed.

LAMBERT

The new moon is still young.

CURTAIN

SCENE II—*A gloomy hall in a castle. A single light burns before the fireplace and makes the walls look blood-stained. PHILMA, seated on a stool, is mixing food in a bowl shaped like a skull, and rocking a cradle in which BROLLO is sleeping.*

PHILMA *(crooning)*

A blood-red drink from a purple stream,  
A shriek of fear from a maniac's dream;  
A sob of pain from a voiceless child,  
A moan of woe from a maid beguiled.  
So sleep, my son, on your bed of crime,  
Death is about you—oh, wake in time!

*Enter LAMBERT through a dark passageway. PHILMA shrieks with fear and seizes a knife.*

PHILMA

Back! back! back! If you touch me, I will kill the child!

## THE SMART SET

LAMBERT

Philma, you are standing between me and the light.

PHILMA

Oh, oh! I thought you were my husband.

LAMBERT

Nay; he has not returned. But how does the child?

PHILMA

He will not eat. His face is turning blue. I fear he is not well.

LAMBERT

You offered him good food?

PHILMA

He never eats when Thoron is away.

LAMBERT

Thoron has been absent many days.

PHILMA

If he does not come back soon, the child will starve to death.

LAMBERT

Let me help you with his broth.

PHILMA (*screaming*)

No, no, no, no! If you touch his food he will die at once.

LAMBERT (*going to window at back*)

The moon has risen over the lake. Look how the wavelets kiss the shore.

PHILMA

Ah, the waves! the waves! How cold the firelight seems!

LAMBERT

It seems cold because you have seen the moon.

CURTAIN

SCENE III—A cove by the sea. On the sand near the front, three armless old men are sitting.

FIRST OLD MAN

The sea is rising. Soon it will fill the cove.

SECOND OLD MAN

We have no arms; we cannot swim.

THIRD OLD MAN

We shall all be drowned.

OLD MEN (*together, beating the sand with their feet*)

The sea, the sea! It rises, we have no arms—no arms!

*Enter* PHILMA, leading in BROLLO.

PHILMA (*to* FIRST OLD MAN)

This is my lawful child. He will not eat. His father is away.

FIRST OLD MAN

I cannot feed him; I have no arms.

PHILMA (*to* SECOND OLD MAN)

My child! my child! If he does not eat he will die.

SECOND OLD MAN

My hands are buried 'neath the golden sands. I cannot feed your child.

PHILMA (*to* THIRD OLD MAN)

Look, look! His face is blue. He has green spots on his eyes. Do you not see? He is dying.

THIRD OLD MAN

I have no hands. I see; I cannot feel.

PHILMA

The sea is rising.

OLD MEN

Rising, rising, rising! No arms! no arms!

BROLLO

Oh, mamma, I see a fish! He is in the water. He is swimming to a rock. Oh, oh, look! look! look! The rock is chasing the fish. Oh, the scales! the scales!

PHILMA

Come, Brollo. Lambert is waiting for us.



BROLLO (*crying*)

Oh, oh, oh, oh! He will kill me.  
He will not let me eat.

PHILMA

Brollo, you must not say that.  
You are not strong enough to believe it.

BROLLO

Oh, oh! I feel sick.

OLD MEN

The sea is rising. No arms! no  
arms!

CURTAIN

SCENE IV—A bedroom. The corpse  
of BROLLO is on the bed. Two candles  
shed a lurid light on its face. PHILMA  
is on her knees, sobbing. LAMBERT is  
nailing together a little coffin

PHILMA

Oh, oh, he is dead, dead, dead! He  
would not eat, and he is dead.

LAMBERT

The coffin is finished. I made it  
all myself.

*Enter THORON.*

PHILMA

Too late! too late! You should  
have come before. If you had been  
here, he would have eaten. But he  
is dead. Too late! too late! too late!

THORON

What did you do with the food?

PHILMA

It rotted as soon as you had gone.  
Oh, the worms! the worms! Oh, oh!

LAMBERT

See, Thoron, how quickly I have  
made a coffin for your child!

THORON

You have starved my son.

PHILMA

No, no, no! It is not true. He  
would not eat.

THORON (*drawing his sword*)

You must die.

PHILMA (*screaming*)

Oh, oh! I did not! I did not! He  
would not eat!

THORON (*killing her*)

Make the coffin large enough for  
two.

LAMBERT

I cannot. You have done wrong  
to kill her. She did not starve the  
child; I poisoned his food before you  
went away. (*Beats his brains out  
with a hammer, and dies.*)

THORON

Perhaps I have been too hasty. I  
should have washed the cup.

OLD MEN (*outside*)

Help! help! We drown! Oh, the  
sea! No arms! no arms!

THORON

Oh, oh, oh! Too late! too late!  
(*Goes mad.*)

CURTAIN



## AN INDICATION

“OH, Amy, I’m just certain that Charley is almost ready to propose to me!” chirped Mabel.

“How do you know? Has he told you he loves you?” asked Amy.

“Not in so many words, but practically so. He acknowledged that he was fond of the good, the true and the beautiful.”

## THE HOUSEMAID

SHY, innocent, and fair of face  
 Showing a figure full of grace,  
 She moves about from morn till night  
 With footsteps ever swift and light,  
 And never lifts her violet eyes  
 Save when my questions seek replies.

Ah, what if I should dare to break  
 A silence kept for custom's sake,  
 And change that simple cotton gown  
 For one of silk, to daze the town,  
 And in those clear eyes claim the right  
 To seek for depths of new delight?

Then might I hope for love and truth,  
 That should renew a burnt-out youth.  
 Shall I so venture, or is she  
 More happy now than she would be  
 If rich and idle?—who can tell?  
 Not I who only wish her well!

No, Mary, dear, I'll not tempt fate;  
 And you shall keep your simpler state.  
 A charming maid, you well might be  
 A charming lady; but, ah, me!  
 I might desire the maid again,  
 And you would be the mistress then!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



## A MAN OF PRINCIPLE

INKSLING—Dashaway has an extremely delicate sense of honor.  
 PUSHQUILL—Honor? Didn't he run away with his friend Blinker's wife?  
 "Yes; but he refused absolutely to rob Blinker of his five children."



## WHERE IT ORIGINATED

ROBBINS—I didn't think you had any idea of marrying the widow.  
 NEWLYWED—I didn't; it was an idea of hers.

# A PRODUCT OF MODERNITY

By Emery Pottle

TO whatever vantage point our philosophy may lead us, it is never proof against the almost universal effect our absences have upon our friends—or, rather, the lack of effect. A bad reputation in New York is worth, according to many excellent authorities, two good ones in Brooklyn. This deduction arises from application of a trite old proverb, declaring that out of sight is out of mind.

When Penfield Wilkins walked down the gang-plank of the ship which had borne him from South Africa back to America, there was mingled with his natural pious gratitude for a safe and prosperous return an unreasonable sense of resentment over the fact that no bands played turbulent welcome, no friends gathered beamingly about him, with fervent, ineffectual questions on his state of health, and, indeed, that no one seemed at all glad to see him back.

To be sure, as he rather fretfully admitted, when he had finished with the customs officers and was seated in a cab on his way to an up-town hotel, he had not told any one he was coming home. That, undoubtedly, might account for it.

A fine, impalpable Autumn mist glistened in the air. Wilkins pushed back the cab window and let the raw damp settle over him in tiny pearls. The Avenue stretched out before him, gray and drearily respectable—its uncertain perspective more than ever indefinite. An ambulance clattered past him, its gong clanging with ostentatious warning.

"Poor devil in there!" said Penfield Wilkins. "Wonder if you hate that bell as I do? They'll forget you, too, will the crowd, as soon as the driver stops beating that infernal gong."

At Thirty-fourth street he passed Whitestone. "Hallo, Whitestone!" he called; "hallo, old man!" Whitestone stopped, instantly. He liked to be hailed by people passing in hansom. He made his way to the curb.

"How are you, Wilkins?" he inquired, easily. "Where are you going?"

Penfield looked at him crossly for a moment; then he smiled.

"Oh, up-town, thanks. Just got home. Don't let me keep you. Thought I'd say 'hallo!'"

"Awfully nice of you," Whitestone replied. "I haven't seen you for an age. Been away long?"

"Go on, driver. Oh, no—just a week or two. See you again," Wilkins called back, in suave wrath.

"Awful ass, that man Whitestone."

And this foregoing incident would seem to disprove the antique contention that in absence any one's heart grows fonder.

That afternoon, at Euphemia Van Corliss's tea hour, Whitestone, in the lucid intervals of flirting with Mrs. Macpherson, announced that he had seen Penfield Wilkins on the Avenue. Elizabeth Grant Torrington, who was about to go, sat down abruptly at the news.

"He was evidently getting back from somewhere," Whitestone pertinently concluded.

There were half a dozen languid

conjectures as to where Penfield Wilkins could have been.

"He's not been seen anywhere for ever so long."

"No; and he used to be everywhere."

"My dear, somewhere I heard he's been away a year and a half, at least."

Whitstone resumed his whispering with Mrs. Macpherson.

Miss Torrington again rose to depart.

Euphemia Van Corliss, on whom Miss Torrington's sudden nervousness of a moment ago had not been lost, smiled on her sweetly.

"Going, Elizabeth, so early? Do have another cup—you'll need it; it's so nasty out, too. Isn't it nice to have Penfield Wilkins back? He was so clever and amusing! I always told Van so. My dear, where has he been? Of course, you know."

That high, clear tone of Euphemia's and the round stress of accent on the "you" betokened a challenge to the fray. Every one sat up in interested silence. Mrs. Van Corliss could let well enough alone with comparative comfort; but to stir up bad enough was a delight never to be foregone.

Elizabeth Torrington looked at her calmly, with her clear, brown eyes.

"Dear Euphemia, you can't have forgotten; you never forget anything, you always say. Penfield Wilkins went to South Africa some eighteen months ago. I'm sure I don't know why. Perhaps Miss Wilson can tell—she knew him so very well. Good-bye."

Miss Torrington departed in a pleasant swish of silk petticoat.

Lucy Wilson, who had been talking to Van Corliss about the tragically precarious life of women in society and the bitterness of female existence in general—Van Corliss was the only man she knew who took her seriously, and he did not know how not to—made a movement with her lips which, to a lip-reader, must have spelled c-a-t.

Thankfully hailing a diversion, Van Corliss said, heartily, "That's so, Miss Wilson. I remember you knew Wil-

kins awfully well once, didn't you?" Then, having put his foot in it, he proceeded to execute a pirouette and inquired closely of her why and when Wilkins had departed.

As a matter of fact, Miss Wilson knew nothing of why Penfield Wilkins had gone to South Africa. But that was of little moment. The truth to her was always like a bad child—to be shaken and put out of sight.

"My opinion is," said she, in positive tones, "that Elizabeth Grant Torrington made a fool of him and then threw him over, which is just what you might expect." She sat back to observe the effect of her remark. Van Corliss smiled. "Indeed, Van Corliss, I don't know why you smile. 'Twas serious at the time. I frequently warned him against her. The Child—as we used to call him—paid no attention. On the day he sailed for Africa, he came to me and said, 'Lucy, you were right; I think you're always right. Now I'm off to forget.' And since then she has jilted John Holland."

In the varnished talk that followed, Euphemia Van Corliss displayed a somewhat similar knowledge of the situation between Wilkins and Elizabeth Torrington. There are no two things like love-affairs and death to beget gratuitous biography.

As they were going down in the lift, Lucy Wilson remarked to Whitstone with resigned triteness—apropos of Penfield Wilkins—"Evil communications corrupt good manners, Whitstone."

To which he responded, vaguely, but with witty intention, "Yes, but how they improve bad ones!"

Miss Wilson merely sniffed.

It was nearly ten o'clock of the morning following Penfield Wilkins's arrival. He sat in his room before a small fire, finishing his roll and coffee, and staring at a newspaper. Presently he crumpled the paper in a ball and tossed it on the coals. "That for you!" he said, briefly. Wrapping his dressing-gown about him, he went to a

window. The day was clear—with a gray-blue, newly-washed look. "So, I begin it all over again, do I? Shall I be the Child, the young Child Wilkins, or—?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, well, there's time enough for that. A new day is sufficient for the evil—or the good—I can find in it. I will go forth."

A servant at that moment brought him a letter. It read:

DEAR OLD PEN:

Meet me to-day at eleven, at the Seventy-second-street entrance of the Park. I must talk to you. I don't know what you are now—you've been silent and away so long—but you used to understand. Please come. ELIZABETH.

Wilkins held the letter in his hand a long time after he had read it. He laid it before him as he dressed, and he smiled frequently at the blue pages and illegible writing. What he was thinking is entirely a matter of conjecture, though once he tore the note sharply in two; later he put the torn pieces in the breast-pocket of his coat.

Elizabeth was waiting impatiently at the Park gate; as he appeared, she scanned him hurriedly, nervously. The old smile spread infectiously over Wilkins's face.

"Oh, Pen, I'm so glad it's you! I was afraid it might be some one else come back to me—to us, I mean. You've been gone so long and you've never sent me—or any one, a word." She seized his outstretched hands, eagerly. "And you're older—and browner—and—and——"

"Wiser, let us say, Elizabeth." Penfield's eyes rested contentedly on her—on the golden brown of her velvet gown, on her brown furs, on her heightened color and on her handsome face. He drew a sigh of profound satisfaction, not unmingled with regret. "Elizabeth, you are delightful, simply delightful. It would be worth coming back from Paradise to see you as you are this morning. Indeed, Elizabeth, I believe when I see you that Paradise is a much exaggerated place."

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"Tell me about yourself, Penfield," responded Elizabeth, hurriedly.

"I cannot, really. I've been trying to tell you about myself for—oh, numbers of years, but I can't. You tell about myself." Her presence put him in a good humor.

"Oh, Penfield! Please be serious to-day. I—don't think I can quite bear anything else. I—" She stopped, suddenly, and looked away to the forlorn skeletons of the trees.

Wilkins glanced at her curiously for a moment, half-inclined to doubt her word. He dropped his eyes from her face, for there were tears on her lashes.

Laying his hand on hers for a moment, Penfield Wilkins said, gently: "We'll talk it over by-and-bye, Elizabeth. Now I'm going to bore you to death with South African experiences. Let's go down this path." If he felt a quivering desire to hold her close in his arms, nothing of it appeared in his manner. After all, a year and a half of absence and a new country are not without value as a finishing school—or a school for new beginning. As he talked, Miss Torrington listened, absently. By the time they had come to the obelisk, she had learned nothing of South Africa, but she had regained her self-control.

"Listen, Penfield," she began, quite calmly; "do you remember our last night together—the night we drove in the cab, and I—you let me talk to you? and you were so nice and gentle—the night before I went away for the Summer?"

Wilkins answered, quite steadily. It seemed to Elizabeth that his voice had grown, like himself, richer, serener, older.

"I remember it, perfectly. In some unaccountable way, I broke my pet stick that night. And you told me of your engagement to John Holland. Is it—are you—er—when is the wedding, Elizabeth?"

"What have you heard?" she demanded, fiercely. The tragic sound of her voice recalled her sense of humor.

"You can't have heard anything so



soon. Isn't that like us moderns, to inquire instantly from whom the gossip comes? Intuitions, friendly solicitations, the most normal interest—it all has to meet that search-light question, 'Who told you?'

"Julie Wilbur used to say, rather liberally—it was the one *mot* she indulged in—that everybody sees everything, everybody tells everything, and everybody—forgets everything," laughed Penfield.

Elizabeth seized the last words.

"Forgets everything—forgets! Do they? I wish—I pray—they do."

She stopped to pick up a dried, rain-stained leaf. It crumbled in her hands almost to dust. "Like that," she continued, flinging away the brown particles.

"You have stained your gloves," Wilkins said, quietly. Her face flushed and she gave him a reproachful look, but he did not seem to notice it. They continued their walk.

"Penfield, I am going to marry General Higginson."

His response—long in coming—was not illuminating, though even and polite in tone. "Ah!"

A breathlessness came into her throat, and with it a burning desire—like a physical tingling at her fingers' ends—to tell, tell all, and tell as quickly and as baldly as possible. There is no withholding in a woman's confidence, once she gives it. The sheer relief of utterance and the fascination of laying bare the most sacred, or the most unholy, sweep her tumultuously from the moorings of reserve.

"Oh, I know what you think of me! I know you think I am heartless and cold-blooded and — and — indecent; and perhaps I am. But, oh, Penfield, dear Penfield, if you could once realize, see my position, understand me! Oh, try, Pen, try to—it's so hard!" She clasped her hands about his arm, in a weak desire for help.

"What of Holland, dear friend?" asked Wilkins, gently.

"Pen, I love him. I love him too well. I care for him so much that I dare not give myself into his keeping.

He is so—so—good! so honestly, masculinely good! and so tender! that's a wonderful and a rare quality in any man, Penfield—and—and so immaculate in his thoughts and in his life and in his ideas of women! He has so much to give, and it is so unsullied! He is—to use an abused and weak word—pure."

Penfield paused, involuntarily, and gazed at her in wonder.

"Elizabeth! I never knew you cared for that sort of thing in a man. I've heard you laugh and joke most ridiculously about some chap who happened to bear such a reputation of white spotlessness. I thought you wanted men to have had their apprenticeship at—the world—or, if you like, women."

She turned to him a face in which quivered reproach, regret and a pathetic amusement.

"Oh, you silly, silly boy! Don't you know—haven't you learned, after all, that that very quality of cleanliness is dearest to all women?"

"Let me tell you all of it," she continued. "I said a moment ago that I loved him too well to give myself into his keeping. And the reason is—oh, it's horrid to say it—money. I met him and loved him, and I love him yet. A year ago, Pen, you know I was, comparatively, a rich woman. At any rate, I had enough for myself, and no one was dependent on me. Perhaps I never told you that, when I was twenty, papa lost all his money. I knew what it was to be poor. I pinched and starved and worked for three years. Oh, how I hated it! Every moment was dust and ashes to me—though I didn't complain. Then we made money again. Papa put through some great business thing before he died—I never understood what—and we were rich. But the thought of those three years is like a frightful dream—don't laugh at me—I can't bear being poor. Since then I've always had twelve thousand a year income, until two months ago something happened; and it's gone down to three. It scares me. I've

been spending every cent of that twelve thousand for myself—on myself and my life. There was enough for John and me once, but now—forgive me, Pen, but he earns very little. His plays—well, the public doesn't want them; they seem good, but it's always the same story: 'Not quite what we want; try another.' I'm a woman of expensive habits; I can't change—I *daren't* be poor—oh, Pen, Pen!— And he's so good to me—and so noble!" She brushed away the tears from her eyes and talked on, rapidly, convulsively. "Ten years ago I could have put my hand in his, and said, 'John, let's try it together; let's eat off a bare deal table, if need be, and I'll scrub it white with my own hands.' Now I've had my lean years; I'm a woman of thirty—and I know myself, my feelings, my little tempers, my nasty moods, my great, unforgettable desire for results, position—God forgive me!—and the comfort money can buy. And I mustn't marry him, feeling like this. I mustn't put the burden of my regret on his shoulders, must I, Pen? Must I? *Must I?*" She trembled, violently, and flung her questions at him, with the hysterical emotion of a woman who must be convinced of her own wisdom. "No, don't answer. I'll be all right in a moment—only, I so want to be fair and just. You think I am exaggerating the situation? or that this love of mine is not the highest type of loving? Well, suppose it isn't. I can never care more for any one else. Penfield, can't you see the reason? I am a product of modern civilization. New York has made me what I am. Don't think that I do not realize how much I am missing in love that others may find—the romance, the poetry, the devotion that goes through lakes of fire and climbs mountains of ice, the great hungry desire— Oh, I almost flagellate myself at night, to think I shall never, perhaps, know the Great Real Thing. But—I always come back to that 'but'—I dare not marry John Holland." Out of sheer weariness, she sank down on a bench.

Wilkins's face was white and drawn. It is a terrible thing to see a woman's heart. "What does Holland say?" He asked this because he could think of nothing else that he could put into words.

"We talked it all over—and I think—I know—he agrees—at least, he says I must do as I think best. And that's another evidence of modern training. We sat one day and, calmly, perfectly dispassionately, discussed the whole affair. Afterward, it was as if some one had died: such a curious goneness in everything! Penfield, we know too much, we feel too much, and we analyze too much. I wish I could wash my mind as clear and clean as this day after the rain, and begin again—loving and living in some simple, old-world garden, in some gentle house of the heart, out where the wide spaces of night, the breath of the fields, the flash of a bird's wing, the sun through the green woods, are the materials for a year's delight. Ah! I'm sorry to make you share my burdens. You ought to be happy, Pen, now you are home again." She smiled, wearily.

He looked at her, soberly. For some reason he could not answer.

"And then General Higginson came"—they were walking again, now, languidly and heavy-footed—"and asked me to marry him, and—I'm to tell him to-day—give him my answer. It will be—what? No, I don't love him—he's rich, yes—I shall say—"

"You will say, 'yes,' Elizabeth, won't you?" asked Wilkins, dully. Some old-fashioned, homely sentiment struggled within him. He wanted to cry out, to denounce her arguments, to bid her go to Holland, have him hold her arms and take the strength of her heart, her life, let her weep her foolish fears out on his breast. And he, Penfield Wilkins, had thought he was old in heart. Ah, he was young, young compared to these modern lovers. There must be romance in life, there must be dreams still. And yet, he could not find the words to tell her this—it seemed like childish reiter-

ation of something learned ages ago. She was right. She could not marry Holland. She must give him up.

"Good God, the pity!" The words broke from him against his will. There were tears in his eyes. "Oh, Elizabeth, Elizabeth, the pity, the pity! Poor girl! And poor old Holland, poor chap! It must be wrong; I know it's wrong. Great God! and I can't find the reason why it is wrong; I can't tell you not to do it because I don't know how—I don't know how!"

She turned on him, quietly. "You understand. I knew you would. It may be wrong to give up John Holland, but I can find no reason why it is so. I am what the world has made me—either prudent, or sensible, or grossly selfish—I am not sure." With swift passion—the sudden storm on a treacherously calm lake—she threw herself on Wilkins.

"Pen, Pen," she whispered, "I love him! *I love him!* Tell me to marry him—tell me I'm wrong—tell me—tell—*tell me!*"

"Beth"—he used the tender diminu-

tive for the second time in his life—"Beth, I cannot tell you."

Elizabeth Torrington's eyes sought his, with a strange, helpless sorrow.

"No," she answered, harshly; "no, you cannot."

They stood together a moment. After the fashion of two people who have come to the end of an exhausting emotional scene, they vaguely wondered what they should do next. The Park was quite deserted. Penfield Wilkins bent reverently and kissed her.

Little more was said.

"The general comes at five to-day for his answer," Elizabeth said, as they parted.

"Holland?" Wilkins could not hold back the question.

"He sailed yesterday for London."

"Who's celebrating to-night?" asked Wilkins of a waiter at the club that evening. The sound of much laughter and jovial cork-popping was issuing lightly from some inner room.

"General Higginson, sir."

"Ah!"



## FROM LOVE'S BOOK

LOVE dreams and lowly murmurs in his sleep.  
With what strange secret do I vigil keep—  
What slumbering passion of long-buried days?  
I veil my face in Love's long hair, and weep!

The lark is singing, and my Love still sleeps.  
The rosy light of morning slowly creeps  
Along the marble beauty of his face—  
Who knows this hour knows Love's sublimest deeps.

So still is Love he hears the farthest sound;  
The footfalls of the seasons in their round,  
The far-off whisper of the rhyming spheres,  
The murmur of the still things underground.

ELSA BARKER.



A GOOD liar is better company than a truthful man with an impediment in his speech.

# THE MOOD OF VICTORY

By Kate Masterson

SHE threw down her embroidery, and took up a novel. But, after a few pages, she found her mind wandering from the lines she was reading. She was thinking, again, of him. And he had left for Washington a week ago without a word. Since then she had moped. Afternoons she had been religiously out when people called. She looked at the cards and wondered how people could live such aimless lives. And always the same ones! His card was not among them. He had high ideals of things. He believed, he once told her, that politics could be made pure. She did not know in the least what he meant by this, but she liked to hear him talk in that way. All the others talked ping-pong. That was too easy.

She tossed the novel over to the other side of the room, went to the piano and began to play something that was open on the rack—Chopin. It sounded so weird that she tried it with one finger backward, and it sounded much better. Then the seamstress came in to pin linings on her, and she had to stand with her hands over her head, until she felt hysterical.

Clothes—clothes—clothes! Always clothes! For what? Nothing! Always dressing for this and dressing for that, as though it were an object. What an empty life it was! Nothing real or earnest about it! Sometimes, she thought she would like to be a nun! Or a nurse—a hospital nurse during a war! He had gone to the war. Of course! He was that kind. He could never, never care for her! Why, she asked him if he played golf one day, and he told her, with a curl of his lip, that he

thought there was something more in life than golf!

There was! there was! And she, and others like her, had found it! It was ping-pong! Ha! ha! She laughed so discordantly that Foo Foo, the Japanese poodle, woke up and looked anxiously at her.

She went to a shelf and picked up a book in a soft, gray leather cover, with the name in gold—"In Tune with the Infinite." It was a book of his. The book-plate had a Latin motto—she had not the slightest idea what it meant. It was so like him to have a book-plate that no one could understand! She turned the pages, and a verse caught her eye:

"Asleep, awake, by night or day,  
The friends I seek are seeking me.  
No wind can drive my bark astray  
Nor change the tide of destiny.

"The stars come nightly to the sky,  
The tidal wave unto the sea;  
Nor time nor space nor deep nor high  
Can keep my own away from me!"

Rather pretty that was, she thought. She read on: "In the degree that we recognize our own inferior powers, then we are rulers and able to dictate; in the degree that we fail to recognize them, we are slaves. The whole of human life is cause and effect; there is no such thing as chance. Are we not satisfied? Then the thing to do is not to spend time railing against the imaginary something we create and call fate. That will come which we cause to come. We invite whatever comes, and, did we not invite it, either consciously or unconsciously, it could not, and it would not, come."

This was the sort of thing he read, she supposed, and understood. "We invite whatever comes." Now, what did that mean, for instance? "We invite——"

Just then the maid came in, with a fluff of pink over her arm. "It is finished, mademoiselle," she said; "you will try it for the last time?"

"Again?" said mademoiselle, crossly, wrinkling her brows. She put the book, open, face down on a cushion. The maid slipped the new gown over mademoiselle's head. She murmured ecstatically in French as she hooked. The shimmering silk, sea-shell in its hue, fell fluttering around mademoiselle from her throat to the carpet, in exquisite lines. Through the sleeves, set in with arabesques of creamy lace, she saw the glimmer of her arms. Her head poised itself as she looked in the mirror. A light had begun to glow in her eyes. She knotted the two great sashes of lace at her bosom, and the ends just reached the floor. She turned and looked in the mirror, over her shoulder. The maid handed her a small hand-glass. She wriggled her back slightly, so that the train would spread out.

"Isn't—it—too long?" she said. Her voice had grown soft as velvet. Her lips had begun to smile slightly.

"Only three yards," said the maid. "It's simply lovely!"

"It is very good," mademoiselle said; "better than I thought! Let me see it with the candles. Light them—yes—light them all! Draw the curtains. What time is it? Four o'clock? So late! Just light the lamp under the kettle, Marie."

"And mademoiselle is not home, as usual, if any one calls?"

Mademoiselle fluffed out the lace sash. "I—I didn't say so, Marie. Yes; I'm at home. What's the use of moping? I'm in the world, and I must live in it! I've got to stay in, if I wish to play! What do I care? Is my hair all right in the back?"

The maid looked at her in surprise. "Yes, mademoiselle," she said. Foo Foo sat up and looked deeply interested. A bell tinkled somewhere. She picked up the book with the gray cover. A trim servant came in with a florist's box and a card—it was his. She touched her hair once or twice with her fingers, and smiled mockingly at him as she saw him in the doorway.



## REASSURING

"OH, Miss Van Amsterdam," ejaculated little Mrs. Montgomery, who had called to see about getting up the charades and tableaux for the church entertainment, "you just must help us. We want somebody to be Cleopatra, and you will be just the very one."

"But my dear Mrs. Montgomery," replied Miss Van Amsterdam, archly, "I would not be a good selection for Cleopatra. Why, she was the most beautiful woman of ancient times."

"Don't let that disturb you at all, my dear," replied the smiling little Mrs. Montgomery, reassuringly. And with that graceful tact for which she is so noted, she added: "Don't let that disturb you at all. These tableaux and charades will be merely burlesques, you know."

CHARLES NEWTON HOOD.



IT is hard to believe that a man is telling the truth when you know that you would lie, if you were in his place.



# THE SPIRIT OF THE REED

By Bliss Carman

ONCE I saw (O breath of Summer) in the azure prime of June,  
When the Northland takes her joy and sets her Wintered life in tune,  
The soft wind come down the river, where a heron slept at noon;

Stir the ripening meadow-grasses, lift the lily-pads, and stray  
Through the tall green ranks of rushes bowing to its ghostly sway;  
Then I heard it, like a whisper of the world, take voice and say:

“Mortal, by the woodwind’s murmur and the whisper of the stream,  
I, who am the breath of grasses and the soul of Summer’s dream,  
Once was Syrinx, whom a great god loved and lost and made the theme

Of his mournful minor music. Nay, I who had worn the guise  
Which allured him, yet eluded, vanishing before his eyes,  
When his heart held lonely commune, taking counsel to devise

Some new solace for sad lovers that should give the spirit vent,  
Lovelier than speech of mortals where the stricken soul is pent  
And the longing gropes for language large enough for beauty’s bent;

When he drew the reeds and ranged them, rank by rank from low to shrill,  
Bound them with the flax together—I was inspiration still,  
I was heartache crying through them, I was echo on the hill.

And forever I am cadence, joyous, welling, sad or fond,  
When the breath of god or mortal, breaking time’s primeval bond,  
Blows upon the mouths of wood and all the mellow throats respond.

Not a flute, but I have hidden in its haunted hollow mould;  
In the deep Sicilian twilight, when the shepherd piped to fold,  
I have been the eerie calling of the Pan pipes rude and old;

In the ivory monaulos, when the soft Egyptian stars  
Sentry’d Cleopatra’s gardens, through the open window-bars  
I went forth, a splendid torment, o’er the dreaming nenuphars.

In the silver-mounted laurel played by some Byzantian boy,  
I was frenzy, when the throng night after night went mad for joy,  
As the dancer Theodora made the Emperor her toy.

In the boxwood bound with gold I drew my captives down the Nile  
To the love-feasts of Bubastis, lovers by the thousand file,  
Willing converts to my love-call, children of the changeless smile.

Babylonian Mylitta heard me keep the limpid tune,  
When the lovers danced before her at the feast of the new moon,  
Till the rosy flowers of beauty through her sacred groves were strewn.

And Sidonian Astarte and the Asian Cypriote  
Knew the large, unhurried measure of my earth-sweet pagan rote,  
When the dancing youths before them followed me from note to note.

Where some lithe Bithinian flute-boy, nude and golden in the sun,  
Set his red mouth to the twin pipes, I was in each pause and run,  
When his manhood took the meaning of the love-notes one by one.

And amid the fields of iris by the blue Ionian sea,  
I was solemn-hearted sweetness and pure passion soon to be  
In the dark-haired little maid who piped her budding melody.

I was youth and love and rapture, I was madness in their veins,  
Calling through the heats of Summer, calling in the soft Spring rains,  
From the olive Phrygian hillsides and the deep Boeotian plains.

I but blew, and mortals followed; I but breathed, and they were glad;  
King and mendicant and sailor, courtesan and shepherd lad;  
For there is no creed nor canon laid on music's myriad.

Not a tribe nor race nor people born in darkest savagery,  
Dwellers in the Afric forest or the islands of the sea,  
But I wooed them from their war-drums—made them gentle—set them free.

Silence fell upon the tam-tams throbbing terror through the night,  
And the prayer-gongs ceased to conjure cowering villages with fright,  
When my cool note, clear as morning, called them to a new delight.

I, the breath of flute and oboe, golden wood and silver reed,  
Put away their fear, and taught them with my love-tone to give heed,  
When the love grew large within them, to the lovely spirit's need.

Henceforth no mere frantic rhythm of beating foot and patting hand,  
Nor monotonous marimba could suffice for soul's demand,  
When joy called her wayworn children and peace wandered through the land.

Love must build a better music than the strumming tambourine  
To ensphere his worlds of wonder, height and depth and space between,  
Pleasure-lands for Soul, the lover, to preëempt as his demesne.

So he took the simple reed-note, as a dewdrop clear and round,  
Blew it (magic of creation!) to the tenuous profound  
Of sheer gladness, light and color of the universe of sound.

And there soars the shining structure, tone on tone as star on star,  
Spheres of knowledge and of beauty, where love's compensations are,  
And the plenitudes of spirit move to rhythm without a jar;

Every impulse in its orbit swinging to the utmost range  
Of the normal sweep of being, through unfathomed gulfs of change,  
Poised, unswerved, and never finding aught unlovely or unstrange.

When some dark Peruvian lover set the love-flute to his lip,  
I was the new soft enchantment loosed upon the dusk, to slip  
Through the trees and thrill the loved one from warm nape to finger-tip;

Till she could not choose but follow where my player piped for her;  
So I roused the love within her, set the gypsy pulse astir,  
With my wild delicious pleading, strong as incense, fine as myrrh.

When for love the Winnebago took his courting-flute and played  
His wild theme for days together near the lodge door of his maid,  
I was ritual and rapture of the triumph he essayed.

And my brown Malayan lovers pierce the living gold bamboo,  
For the lone melodious accents of the wind to wander through,  
While my haunting spirit tells them many a secret old and true.

In the soft Sumatran pan-flute with its seven notes I plead;  
I am help to the Marquesan in his slender scarlet reed;  
From the immemorial East I draw my dark-eyed gypsy breed.

Chukma, Dyak, Mahalaka, Papuan and Ashanti,  
Hillmen from the Indian snows, canoemen from the Carib sea,  
Tribesmen from the world's twelve corners, at my whisper come to me—

All the garlanded earth-children in their gala bright array,  
Laughing like the leaves, or sighing like the grass-heads which I sway;  
For my lure is swift to lead them, and my solace strong to stay.

And the road must melt before them and their piping fill all lands,  
Till a new world at their fluting like a magic flower expands,  
And Soul's unexplored dominion is surrendered to their hands.

Did not I, the woodbreath, calling, make thy mortal pulses ring,  
And that old chinked barn, gray-weathered, with its dusty rafters sing?  
Was not I the long, sweet love-throb in the music-house of Spring?

Think how all the golden willows and the maples, crimson-keyed,  
Kept the rare appointed season, flowering at the instant need,  
When the wood-pipes give my summons and the marshy flutes were freed.

Love be, then, in every heart-beat, when the year comes round to June,  
And life reaches up to rapture, lingering on the perfect tune,  
As this evening in your valley silvered by the early moon."

Thus I heard the voice of Syrinx, by the dreamy river shore,  
Sift and cease, as one might pass through a large room and close the door;  
And I knew myself a stranger on this lovely earth no more.



## SLOW WORK

GREAT AUTHOR—Yes, I wrote that book in fourteen days.  
FRIEND—Why the delay?

## THE DREAM BEAUTIFUL

THOUGH full of care  
 I tread the round  
 Of toil in which man's eager life is bound,  
 I faint not 'neath the load I bear,  
 For, grievous though the burden sometimes be,  
 I dream of thee!

And when, at night,  
 I lie enwound  
 In silence that is sweeter than all sound,  
 And darkness, kindlier than light,  
 Shuts out the busy world awhile, and free,  
 I dream of thee!

Like to a breath  
 Of fragrance blown  
 From some shy blossom, hidden and alone,  
 Redeeming frost and Wintry death,  
 So ever comes, like scent of bloom to me,  
 My dream of thee!

Like to a star  
 Amidst the clouds,  
 When angry tempest hurtles in the shrouds,  
 And, darkling, drifts the mariner afar,  
 So, out of storm and shadow, beams on me  
 My dream of thee!

FLORENCE EARLE COATES.



## IN A BAD WAY

"THEY are very poor, aren't they?"  
 "Awfully! So poor that they can't even run into debt."



## ECONOMY

MRS. TODD—I don't feel as if I could afford to get a new gown to-day.  
 MRS. NODD—What are you going to do?  
 "Wait until to-morrow."

# THE REJECTING OF CARTWRIGHT

By Temple Bailey

CARTWRIGHT had always believed in the blindness of love—that is, of woman's love. "If she loves you, she won't see your faults," he had said, complacently.

He held this opinion until he met Edith Martine. Miss Martine was really very nice. Cartwright had decided that when he saw her on his first night at the Mountain House. She was small and fair and sympathetic, and she was a gentlewoman. Cartwright was discriminating. He often associated with girls who were not gentlewomen—sometimes he liked that kind best, but he knew the difference.

Cartwright was susceptible up to a certain point, but he did not intend to marry just yet. The resulting conflict between heart and head gave to his end-of-the-Summer partings just the effective tinge of sadness.

He worked through the usual first stages of Summer flirtation with Miss Martine, and things went smoothly until he discovered that she possessed an unyielding conscience.

"Please don't," she said, one night, when he tried to take her hand; "please don't." And her voice trembled.

"Why not?" asked Cartwright.

"It isn't right," she said; and, try as he might, Cartwright could not shake her decision.

He tried again, after three weeks of rather intimate acquaintance, with the same result.

"Don't you like it?" he asked, with a most effective use of his gray eyes.

Her face flamed. "What if I did? It wouldn't be right."

Cartwright laughed a satisfied laugh. At least, the blush had told him something.

"If we were engaged, would it be right?" he murmured, and tried to look into her eyes.

But she kept her lashes down, discreetly.

"Perhaps," she said, sedately.

A week later, she again called him to account. They had ridden from the Mountain House to the lake, and had stopped at a quaint road tavern. He had ordered lemonade for her, and something stronger for himself.

Then, when the waiter had gone, she touched his tall, cool glass with her finger.

"I wish you wouldn't," she said.

"Why not?" he asked, as before.

Again came her decision, "It isn't right."

"What a Puritan you are!" he said, irritated; "it won't hurt me."

She raised her eyes, and scrutinized his fine, cynical face.

"I could not marry a man who drank," she said.

Cartwright smiled at the implied warning. And he had not even asked her!

"That is very wise of you," he said, quietly.

For a little while, there was no sound but the tinkling of the ice against their glasses. The rustic pavilion in which they sat hung almost over the edge of a bluff. Looking off over the valley, they seemed to float in a wonderful sea of sunshine.

"I wish this might never end," said Cartwright, as he had said to many other girls, many other times; "but it



will soon be over, and then the old life, the old monotony."

The girl turned her face to him; her eyes shone. "No," she said, "never just the same, for I have known you, and you have known me."

Cartwright gasped, mentally. She was a queer combination of boldness and inexperience, he decided, and he began to be interested.

"You won't forget me?" he asked, softly.

The blue eyes met his honestly, like a child's. Somehow they made him uncomfortable.

"Oh, no," she said, "I sha'n't forget—you."

She rose and leaned over the railing. Cartwright went and stood beside her, towering far above her. For the first time in his life there came to him the feeling of the remoteness of the good woman. There had been girls who had smiled, girls who had blushed, girls who had protested, but no girl like this one with the dreamy, rapt face, that inspired in him a feeling of reverence.

He knew it was time to stop, but the passion of conquest was upon him. He bent his head down, close to hers. "Do you love me?" he breathed, and knew that, if he had been a true man, he would have stated his own feeling first.

With artistic appreciation, he watched the pink flush that traveled from the whiteness of her neck to the whiteness of her forehead. The blush and the trembling of her lips were the only signs of emotion that she showed.

"Oh," she said, "you must let me think it over. Marriage is such a serious thing. I must not decide now. I'll tell you this evening."

Marriage! Cartwright was in for it; but he had managed these things before.

He was waiting for her as she descended the broad stairway that night. Her blue gown was trailing after her. Cartwright liked her best in blue; it suited her ethereal type. Her hair was low on her white neck, and she looked very young and very pure

and very sweet. His fastidious taste was satisfied as he gazed up at her, and she blushed as she met the admiration in his eyes.

"You are perfect," he declared.

"No—oh, no!" she breathed, faintly.

"Too perfect," he said, "for such a man as I."

This was Cartwright's trump card. Women liked to be placed on a pedestal, he knew.

A little frown ruffled her forehead; her eyes were troubled.

"I am afraid that is true," she said.

Cartwright had not expected this. If she had said it with a laugh—but this calm judgment was not pleasant.

"Oh," he said, uncomfortably, "I am sorry you have such an opinion of me."

"I'm sorry, too," she murmured, but she did not take back her words.

Then, with a wistful smile, she swept away to the dining-room.

He decided that she was a little prig. She needed a lesson, and his conscience ceased to trouble him.

That evening, when the rest of the guests were dancing, he led her to a moon-lighted angle of the porch. He seated himself at her feet and looked up at her, with eyes that seemed to adore.

"Don't," she said.

Then, suddenly, she leaned down over him and spoke. In her voice there was an ineffable quality of mingled womanliness and childishness, that touched him strangely.

"I have been thinking," she said, "of all you said this afternoon. Perhaps I encouraged you to say such things to me. But—I really care for you."

Cartwright was silent and stricken in the knowledge conveyed by her confession.

"But it would never do," she went on, hopelessly. "You are a man of the world, and you do so many things that seem wrong to me." She laid her hand on his sleeve, as if to soften the hardness of her words. "And—I could not marry a man I could not look up to."

In the reaction, swift anger surged through him. On his lips were the words that would tell her that he had offered to her not the devotion of a lifetime, but the admiration of seven, or fourteen, or twenty-one days, as his vacation might extend.

"My dear girl—" he began, cuttingly, and stopped.

He simply could not do it. The small fingers had slipped down his coat sleeve, until they touched his hand; and at the touch all the shallow vanity in him turned to manhood. He wished—well, he could always win love. But respect? He had not thought of that.

"I am not good enough for you," he said, and was surprised to know that he really meant it.

Again the troubled frown ruffled her forehead.

"Please don't think it's conceit," she pleaded.

"No," said Cartwright, steadily; "It's simply self-preservation."

Then some one hunted them out and claimed her for a dance, and she went away. Cartwright sat and smoked far into the night.

"And I hadn't even asked her," he said, at last.

But this time he said it with a sigh.



## THE ONE DAY

TO think that to the world this night may seem  
Only the hours 'twixt sunset-time and sleep—  
This night, when love made real my dearest dream,  
And gave it me to keep!

That others have not known this one white day,  
But let it pass like any other one,  
While, love-led, hand in hand, we found the way  
Into the Land of Sun!

O heart, dear heart, they have not seen nor known!  
But evermore this one day stands apart,  
Glad, rare and radiant—this one day alone,  
Deep shining in my heart!

CHARLES BUXTON GOING.



## A DIFFERENCE

MRS. DE STYLE—My husband is always in for a good time.  
MRS. GUNBUSTA—Mine is always out for his.



## UP-TO-DATE

NODD—Have you had your yacht done over?  
TODD—Yes. Vintage of '49.

## LOVE'S SHIELD

LOOK not beyond the obverse of the shield  
 Wherewith Lord Love, thy noble knight and mate,  
 Defends thee from the fell attacks of Fate.  
 Be it to thee a mystery, as sealed  
 As life or death; for its reverse revealed  
 Would, with its dread and sorrow, violate  
 Thy soul, and blind thee at God's very gate;  
 And Love, too, stricken, perish on the field.  
 For on its obverse disk it doth present,  
 Arrayed in heavenly investiture,  
 All images most beautiful and pure—  
 Truth, Hope, Faith, Peace, Joy, Constancy, Content.  
 But on its dark reverse, in vestures dire,  
 Medusa, and the Furies of Desire!

LORENZO SOSSO.



## HIS SAD CONDITION

"YOU have, here in the village, one of the most peculiar lunatics that I  
 have ever seen in my life," remarked the observant tourist from the  
 North.

"Ah, yes," nonchalantly replied the landlord of the tavern at Polkville,  
 Arkansas. "A chap with long, dankish-looking hair, a brow that bulges out  
 like the back of a snapping-turtle, and a note-book and pencil everlastingly in  
 his hand? He is peculiar, and no mistake; but he isn't a lunatic, exactly,  
 although he does act like one. He is a writer from up in New England some-  
 where, who has come down here to study characters and local idiosyncrasies, as  
 he calls them. No, he isn't exactly crazy, but he puts up a lifelike imitation  
 of insanity at times!"

"Oh, that is not the person to whom I was referring," interrupted the  
 tourist. "The man I have in mind is a thin, stooping, yellow-complexioned  
 fellow, and his most marked peculiarity is that every now and then he suddenly  
 jumps one way or the other out of the track he is pursuing, as if he feared there  
 were some great and imminent danger behind him."

"Oh, I know now who it is. That's Lab Ricketts, who has taken so much  
 quinine for his ague that his ears ring all the time. Why, the other night he  
 ran the whole length of the main street, yelling like mad, because he thought  
 he heard the fire-bell clanging its clapper out, when it was only the ringing in  
 his own head. And the day before yesterday he suddenly jumped out of the  
 path into the creek, screaming, 'So, boss! So, boss!' at the top of his voice.  
 He thought there was a mad cow with a bell on right behind him. Oh, yes;  
 he does act somewhat peculiar."

# THE LOVES OF ANNE

By the Baroness von Hutten

“SHE is an angel, mother!” cried Anne, her small brown face aglow. “Perfectly glorious.”

“What is her name, do you know?”

Anne sat down and emptied the contents of her pocket into her blueingham lap.

“Her name?” she repeated, absently. “Oh, no; I don’t know her name. But you should see her hair and her eyes and the way she walks—all wavy. Her elbows are too sweet for words.” Absently still, she felt her own elbows, the childish sharpness of which was visible under the thin stuff.

Mrs. Orme laughed, as she often laughed at her daughter. “In a word, I suppose, another love,” she said, after a pause, for she knew how Anne fell delightfully, girlishly in love with almost every woman she might see.

“M-m,” assented Anne. “And Jimmy, the little boy—I never saw such a duck. He’s four and wears sailor trousers—long—and a Leghorn hat with a red silk fisherman’s cap on the crown. It flops in the most lamb-like way.”

“Will you be a duck and an angel and a lamb, and give me my drops? After which, out of philanthropy, you had better go out again, and I will take my nap.”

Anne counted out the drops, and then went forth into the sun.

Westward over the hard, yellow sand she flew, her idea of taking a walk being to go as fast as possible. Yet her quick eyes noted everything—the broad billows of land to her right, sparsely covered with coarse sea-

grass; beyond, the level stretch of pine woods, and to her left the warm blue sea, blinking beneath the setting sun. Anne was just eighteen, and it was her first visit to Italy. It was a beautiful, wonderful world!

Suddenly a new joy was added to the list.

Under a red umbrella sat a smartly dressed nurse-maid, and by her the lovely little boy was digging holes in the glistening sand.

“Oh, you darling,” cried Anne, “may I help dig?”

“Have you got a spade?” answered the child, gravely.

“*Fi donc*, Monsieur Jeemie! Say, ‘yes,’ nice to the young lady.” The nurse was reading *Le Journal pour Rire*, and hailed Anne’s advent with pleasure.

The next morning Anne explored the little town, making two dear friends en route—a very old fisherman and a very young baby, who chewed solemnly on a half-ripe cucumber as she poked his fat, brown cheeks.

There were cacti in the dusty square; there was a cold gray church with a miracle-working Madonna, whom Anne regarded with awe, and there was, better still, the long pier, with the rusty-sailed fishing-boats starting out for their day’s work. It was all enchanting. But best of all was her home-coming. As she entered the cool little hall, a lady was coming down-stairs—a beautiful, golden-haired lady—carrying a straw hat trimmed with poppies.

Anne’s eyes grew big with admiration, and then something happened that was almost too good to be true.

The pretty boy ran out of the little reading-room, calling, "mama!"

In five minutes Anne knew that the beautiful lady was Mrs. Cresborough, that she was delighted to lend Jimmy to Anne for the whole morning, and that Mrs. Cresborough was not only the most beautiful person in the world, but the kindest.

At breakfast Anne had a disappointment. The gentleman who came and sat down between the beautiful lady and Jimmy, with an air of belonging to them, was as old as the hills—nearly forty. That *she* should have such an aged husband! Anne's coffee lost its savor.

Then another gentleman came and joined Mrs. Cresborough's party—an exceedingly handsome young fellow, with long, dark lashes and a short beard. Anne at once decided that this was the husband and the years-stricken one only the brother. The handsome man did not eat, but leaned one elbow on the table and talked in an undertone.

Anne was curious, but she was also honorable; she had had enough to eat, and honor compelled her to leave the dining-room. As she passed him, Jimmy stopped her with an imperative wave of his milky spoon.

"I'm coming, too, Anne; wait a minute," he said. His mother smiled, lazily; the handsome man continued to roll a bit of crumb between his thumb and forefinger, and did not look up.

The other man, however, rose and bowed. "You must not let my little boy torment you," he said.

Anne felt a pang of disappointment. Who, then, was the handsome man? "Oh, no," she stammered, somewhat confused; "he doesn't torment me. I love him—I mean, I love children."

Mrs. Cresborough bit her lip: Anne looked such a child herself! "If you will tell me your name, I will teach him what to call you."

"My name is Anne Orme, and I told him to call me Anne."

"Mrs. Cresborough introduced her husband, and then turned to the roller of crumbs. "Count!"

Opening his half-shut eyes, the young man jumped up, suddenly bowing.

"Miss Orme, Count San Luca."

As soon as possible, Anne flew away to tell her mother, who had had a bad night and was not yet up.

"Cresborough? Ah, yes; it must be Maud Smith and her husband. What luck for you, Anne! Four beautiful dears to adore!"

Anne laughed. "I don't adore *him*, mother; he looks very dull. But she is seraphic; and the count is awfully handsome—dark and romantic, you know, with beautiful, soft eyes, like a nice, good-tempered cow."

"Anne!" laughed her mother. "To compare the beauteous Italian nobleman to the homely cow!"

But Anne only shook her head. Cows *do* have beautiful eyes.

## II

Two or three days after the meeting with the Cresboroughs, Anne went out early to seek Jimmy, and found him hard at work digging, a few yards away from the *capana* in which sat his mother and San Luca.

With a brief good morning to Mrs. Cresborough, in which all her adoration looked out of her eyes, the young girl passed on and, sitting down by Jimmy, began playing with him. Mrs. Cresborough lay back in her low canvas chair, a bit of lace-work on her knees.

"Sweet little thing," she murmured.

"M-m," answered San Luca from his place at her feet.

"You are very rude."

"Am I? I beg your pardon. My rudeness was due to my honest inability to answer your remark."

"Why?"

"You know as well as I do," he returned, curtly, "that I never see any one but you."

Maud Cresborough flushed. "What nonsense!"

Down by the lace-frilled ocean, James Hobart Cresborough and Rex, his dog, were pacing up and down. A



man passed crying his wares, "Gloves, of silk, of kid, of thread"; a woman was wading waist-deep in the blue water, ploughing up shell-fish.

Anne and Jimmy, noticing this most interesting person, rushed to the water's edge to inquire what she was doing. The woman gave them no answer, but struggled on at the hard toil in dogged silence.

"Shell-fish, Miss Anne," explained Cresborough; "all kinds."

Anne patted Rex's silky head. "Poor thing!" she said. Then, the delight of all things coming back to her: "What a darling Rex is!"

"Yes, he's a good old dog."

"I have been thinking, Mr. Cresborough, how very lucky you are."

"I, Miss Anne?"

"Yes, I mean—Jimmy is such a dear, and then—Rex, and then—Mrs. Cresborough is so perfect!"

He smiled at the quaint, shy enthusiasm in her voice. "Yes, am I not very fortunate?"

Anne was content. She had several times noticed in him a curious, dull look, as of one patient in misery, and she had now slyly tested him. He did appreciate his blessings! He was not sympathetic and he was pitifully old, but he must have had some good qualities, or she would not have loved him.

She went back, near Mrs. Cresborough, and sat down. The two next her were very quiet. The count had an open book on his knees, but he was not reading. His eyes were fixed on the sea.

Anne burned with sudden indignation. Mrs. Cresborough was watching her husband, and he, insensible wretch, was walking away with his dog, with never a backward glance. San Luca's picturesque dark head stood out strongly against Mrs. Cresborough's white gown. Anne thought his tragic black eyes ideal. He never smiled, and that, too, was a great advantage for a hero. For he *was* a hero—whose, she did not know; not Mrs. Cresborough's, of course, but somebody's.

Anne hoped, vaguely, that sometime, when she was older, she might

have a hero like him. It never occurred to her to wish for San Luca himself. Her adoration of him was very humble, partaking of the nature of that of the moth for the star. But he might do for Bessie Chester, who was very blonde. Anne sifted the warm sand through her fingers, and dreamed.

"Anne!" Mrs. Cresborough rose, folding her work. "We are going in; will you come?"

Anne jumped. "Oh, yes; of course. And—may I carry your hat?"

The beauty smiled and went on ahead with San Luca, as her husband came up and joined Anne.

"How lovely she is!" the girl said, looking down at her own tumbled frock, with indulgent disdain; "how perfect her gown is!"

At the door of the hotel they were met by a young man with a short black pipe in his hand. Anne ran to him, her face aglow with delighted surprise. "Oh, Dick, how ripping of you to come!"

The Cresboroughs passed on with a casual glance, San Luca leaving them with a parting bow, in which Anne was included.

"My dear little thing, how well you look! I've been waiting for you, and didn't see you come. You were hidden by the big woman."

"Oh, Dick, she isn't a big woman!"

"Isn't she?" Dick Brown nodded indifferently. "All right; I don't care. Are you really glad, Nancy?"

"Of course I'm glad; I was thinking, only this morning, that I'd be perfectly happy if you and Billy were here."

"Billy!" Dick's eyes, which had begun to beam, clouded. But Anne did not see. She was running on ahead to tell her mother.

### III

WHILE Anne was impatiently submitting to the ministration of Larabee, her mother's maid, in the next room, Dick said, very softly, "Well, Aunt May, what do you think?"

Mrs. Orme laid a pale finger on his lip. "Not yet, Dick. You would only startle her."

He sighed. "It's awfully hard."

"I know, but it would change her, and I don't wish her changed just yet."

"Nor I, heaven knows! She is perfect."

For a few minutes, he stared moodily at the oiled brick floor between his big, well-shod feet. Then he asked, abruptly: "Who is that black-eyed chap with the Romeo expression?"

Mrs. Orme laughed. "Don't be a goose. He is one of her loves, and is hardly aware of her existence. I'll let you know the minute there begins to be any one."

He rose and went to the window. "Thanks, I know you will; and yet—Rippin' view," he added, as Anne entered the room in a fresh frock, with smoothed hair.

The next few days passed in a whirl of delight. One afternoon Anne, Mr. Cresborough and Dick rode on donkeys up through olive terraces and chestnut groves, to a village high perched on a hill, where they inspected a famed Madonna; and afterward they drank sweet wine on the terrace of a little pink inn.

Dick Brown never forgot that day. Anne wore a stiffly-starched blue gown, with a white sailor collar. In spite of her broad hat, she was sunburned—her little nose was red and shining. It was, perhaps, unlovely, and it was certainly unpoetical, but Dick liked her sunburned.

He even thought, that evening, on looking at Mrs. Cresborough's beautiful pink-and-white face, that she looked like an under-done bun. Such is the tender passion!

Mrs. Cresborough was very gracious to Anne. She knew that Anne adored her, and she adored being adored. Besides, Anne was, unconsciously, very useful.

One day, Cresborough and Dick, who had become good friends, went to Pisa, and Anne set out for a solitary walk. It was a bright, windy after-

noon, and she soon turned off the beach into the Pineta, which was agreeably sheltered. The ground was covered with slippery, fragrant pine-needles, and the rushing wind blew lovely melodies through the branches overhead. Anne went on, buzzing to herself in a strange little way that was her nearest approach to singing. She was so happy that, when she came suddenly on Mrs. Cresborough and San Luca sitting on a log, she burst out into a positive cry of delight.

"Oh, how nice! How glad I am to see you, Mrs. Cresborough! Isn't it a heavenly day, and don't the woods smell gloriously?"

Confident of the welcome Mrs. Cresborough usually gave her, she sat down by that lady and beamed on her with the maddening beam of the *de trop*.

"Isn't this too far for you to come alone?" Mrs. Cresborough asked.

Anne continued to beam. "Oh, this isn't far. What a lovely gown! You look like—like—the goddess of the forest!"

Mrs. Cresborough did not answer, and San Luca impatiently whipped his yellow boots with his stick. Anne was startled, without knowing why.

Then the Italian rose. "Shall we go on, *signora*?" he said, so pointedly that even Anne understood. She flushed, and tears came to her eyes as she jumped up.

"Good-bye, Anne." Mrs. Cresborough held out her hand. "Have a nice walk!"

Picking up her gown in a way which poor Anne, even in the anguish of that moment, admired, she walked slowly away through the shifting shadows, San Luca at her side.

Anne watched them, the tears in her eyes edging everything with iridescent colors. "They didn't want me," she said to herself, bitterly; "they didn't *want* me, and I was such a donkey that I didn't understand!" Then she turned and went slowly home. It seemed very far, and her heart was as heavy as the drifted sand that impeded her weary progress.

But she did not tell her mother what had happened—she only told her mother pleasant things.

That evening Anne kept carefully away from Mrs. Cresborough, and greatly delighted Dick by asking him to take her out in a sailboat. Antonio took them in his red-winged *Seabird*, and, with the dramatic sense born in every Italian, steered them straight into the setting sun.

Anne sat in unusual silence, her eyes big with the boundlessness before her. That quiet was something so new in her that Dick watched her with a little feeling of uneasiness in his heart. What if she were thinking of that black-eyed chap!

Anne was thinking of the black-eyed chap—and Mrs. Cresborough. She was deciding that, though they had hurt her dreadfully, they had not meant to do so, and that it was her own fault; she had been stupid and tactless.

When the sun had really gone, and the gold began to fade from the ruffled water, Antonio turned his boat and made for home. The sight of land broke the spell, and Anne, having reassured herself as to the innocence of her two loves, chattered gaily all the way back. She even ate a large piece of gray bread and drank a glass of wine that the old fisherman gave her. It had been a beautiful evening; God was in His heaven; all was right in the world.

As Anne and Dick passed along the beach, on their way to the hotel, Mrs. Cresborough, who was sitting solitary in the shadow, called to Anne, and Dick went on alone. Anne was shy, but in a few minutes she felt herself again at her ease—more than that, gloriously proud and happy.

Mrs. Cresborough had confided in her! It appeared that San Luca had been telling Mrs. Cresborough his troubles, just as Anne appeared in the wood, and, as he was very unhappy about something, and was asking Mrs. Cresborough's advice, Mrs.

Cresborough put it to Anne whether there was not some excuse for his rudeness.

Anne saw, of course, that there was every excuse, and very humbly apologized for her stupidity in not disappearing into thin air at once.

"The truth is," Mrs. Cresborough continued, "that I was awfully sorry for him, even though he was rude to my own little Anne."

Her own little Anne laughed with pleasure. "Poor man! I wish I might ask just one question? I'd never, never tell!"

Mrs. Cresborough smiled. "I think you might, dear; just one."

After a minute's hesitation, Anne said: "Well, he is so romantic-looking, I thought, perhaps, he might be in love—frightfully in love!"

Mrs. Cresborough patted the thin little hand that lay in hers. "Yes, you are right; the poor fellow is 'frightfully in love.'"

Anne tried to be sorry, but she could not. It was too interesting. A love-affair, and, she hoped, a hopeless one! He looked like a hopeless lover—hopeful ones are so idiotic!

While she pondered these things, footsteps came down to the boardwalk from the street behind, and San Luca himself appeared, a cigarette between his lips.

Anne bolted, muttering something about her mother.

#### IV

"MOTHER, what is the matter with Dick?"

Mrs. Orme looked up, quickly. "With Dick?"

"Yes. He's so queer lately!"

"I don't know, dear. Perhaps he isn't well."

"That must be it; and I'm perfectly sure he hasn't any quinine with him. I'll give him some of ours."

Mrs. Orme could not repress a smile at this new application of that useful drug.

"I noticed it first two or three days

ago, after our sail. He's so grouchy! Says he doesn't sleep well, too, and I call that a bad sign."

"Do you?" laughed her mother.

Even in Italy in May, alas, it sometimes rains! For four days, now, it had poured. Anne wrote dozens of letters; she also wrote a novel. The novel was about San Luca and his unknown fair. Anne herself thought it rather good.

During the bad weather Mrs. Cresborough kept her room, and Dick Brown, curiously enough, made hay. He and Anne took long walks together, as neither of them minded a wetting, and he waited patiently while Anne visited some of her friends in the village. He owned an estate in Ireland, and thought he could stand a good deal in the way of smells, but after one trial he gave up going into the houses. Nevertheless, the quinine, it seemed to Anne, had done Dick good, and she declared that he was growing fat.

One afternoon the sun came out and beamed at Anne. That evening she was told by Mrs. Cresborough that Count San Luca wished them all to go to lunch with him at his villa in the hills.

Anne was enchanted. San Luca was very, very kind to invite her.

But that evening Anne received a shock. She found, on going to her room for the night, that she had left her hat in her *capana*, on the beach, and as she knew the damp night air would injure it, she went to fetch it. Her coming, over the soft sand, was as silent as the moonlight. Suddenly, she stood quite still, and the earth seemed to rock before her.

Mrs. Cresborough and San Luca were in the *capana*, and the Italian, kneeling by the chair in which she sat, held the beautiful woman in his arms.

They were very quiet, as though they had been in the same attitude for some time, and Anne could see Mrs. Cresborough's lovely face upturned in the moonlight. At length, as the girl started to turn away, they heard her, and sprang apart.

"The devil!" said San Luca.

Anne fled, incontinently. She ran and ran down the beach, her little black shadow scudding beside her, typical of the horror she was trying to escape. At length she stopped, out of breath, and, turning, followed her shadow home. She was aghast, despairing.

When she reached the hotel, she was told that Mrs. Cresborough wished to see her.

Mrs. Cresborough, in a blue dressing-gown, lay on her bed. The room was unlighted but for a candle, and a broad band of moonlight cut the floor into two parts.

"Sit down," Mrs. Cresborough said, impatiently pointing to a chair.

Anne did not move; she would stay on her side of the moonlight.

"Anne, you are unjust."

Anne would rather have been called cruel than unjust, but she did not speak.

"Anne, dear, I was so shocked! The poor boy is in love—with *me*!"

"I know," answered Anne, drily.

Mrs. Cresborough thought for a moment, then continued: "I thought you would be sorry for me. Think of my feelings!" She moved, and Anne could see that her eyes were red. "I am so ashamed! And it was not my fault; I never suspected anything." Still Anne did not change her position. "Oh, Anne, I thought you would help me!"

And then, at last, Anne crossed to the other side of the bar of moonlight.

When she was once more alone, Mrs. Cresborough went to the window and looked out. Down at the edge of the waves walked a man—it was her husband. Frowning, she crossed the room and, leaning on the other window-ledge, looked long at a small light far up on a hill.

## V

THE next morning San Luca was pacing up and down the terrace of his villa, awaiting his guests. He had

heard nothing from Mrs. Cresborough since she had left him, five minutes after Anne's inopportune apparition in the *capana*, the night before. She had assured him that she could manage Anne, and that the luncheon should take place as arranged—still, it was awkward. Little Miss Anne had made a strange impression on him, as she stood staring at them in the moonlight. He had hardly noticed her before; she had been to him merely one of the tiresome people who surrounded Mrs. Cresborough. He had wasted little thought on any of the tiresome people. Cresborough he frankly despised, for not taking better care of a beautiful wife. Brown the Italian considered a mere English *boule-dogue*, and Anne and Jimmy were children.

Now, however, he remembered something in Anne's face that made him uneasy. Supposing she should take it into her head to tell Cresborough!

It might have been better for him had he gone to Rome that morning—called away by a telegram. He would miss Mrs. Cresborough, for he loved her. Oh, yes, he loved her, but he would get over it! He shrugged his shoulders.

The hot air quivered about the red vases at the ends of the terrace; the whole world smelt of heliotrope. The cook, somewhere off to the left, was singing a love-song. Then San Luca heard the sound of wheels, and crossed the hall to the other side of the house.

At first, he thought Anne was not in the dusty carriage; but he was wrong. Anne was there; much against her wishes, she had come to support her friend.

It was very cool and pleasant in the bare old dining-room, and the luncheon was delicious. Anne was hungry, but she ate as little as possible.

Her attitude amused San Luca, who pressed little attentions on her and gravely watched her struggle to be polite. Mrs. Cresborough had managed to whisper to him that it was all right, that Anne had promised not to tell.

After luncheon they went into the drawing-room.

"Miss Anne," said San Luca, "shall I sing a song to you?"

Anne flushed scarlet, to Dick's despair. "Do you sing?" she stammered.

"I do. Shall I sing to you? Would you not like it?"

"Yes; please do."

So he sang song after song, and Anne's flesh crept on her bones at the queer harmonies of the Southern songs, and the heart-broken wail of the very cheerfully commonplace young man's voice. But, at length, the singer forgot himself, and, watching Mrs. Cresborough in a mirror, sang at her, remembering only that he loved her wildly, passionately—*pro tem*.

Anne was filled with indignation, and, leaving her place, she went and sat down by her friend, to whom she whispered: "He is a beast. Just don't look at him!"

## VI

MAUD CRESBOROUGH was a trifle nervous during the next few days, and the unusual color in her cheeks made her more beautiful than ever. San Luca had recovered from his fear of Anne. He saw that she loathed him, but he knew that she would never tell what she had seen. Mrs. Cresborough's fright had resulted in a caution that increased the Italian's feeling for her tenfold. She had been rather more in love with him than he with her, and he had been somewhat annoyed by the fact; but now she refused to walk with him, or to see him alone, and he found himself in a state bordering on frenzy. He must and would see her!

One day she appeared in a pale-green gown, that drove him quite mad. He wrote a note which he slipped into her hand, under her husband's very eyes—a fact that gave him a certain satisfaction. Then he awaited results. A week earlier he would have laughed at the idea of running away with her, but her avoidance of him, combined with the green gown, had brought him to the point of threatening



to shoot himself, if she would not go with him. He knew that he would not shoot himself, but he knew that, at that moment, he thought he would.

And she believed him. Shortly after having read the note, she went to her room, where she found Anne playing with Jimmy.

"How you do love children, Anne!" she said, almost fiercely. "I hope you'll have some of your own, some day."

"I hope so, too," answered Anne, promptly.

"You probably won't, however!" went on Mrs. Cresborough; "that's the way of the world."

Anne looked up. "What's the matter? Are you not well? Or has he been bothering you?"

"Yes, he has been bothering me. But it will be over to-morrow."

"Why, is he going away?"

"Yes."

Anne heaved a deep sigh. "Thank goodness! Then you'll be happy again!"

The beautiful woman smiled. "Yes, I'll be happy—after to-morrow."

And she meant it. She was a weak, silly woman, unable to bear the weight of her own great beauty, but she loved San Luca, and she really believed that she would be happy with him. She could not realize the inevitability of the future, and she could not read the character of the man, who did love her, in his way, but who had loved and would love, many others.

Anne sat down on the floor, and took off her shoes. It was only nine o'clock and still nearly light; Anne remembered when she had always gone to bed by daylight. She was very happy, for San Luca was going away the next day. Whistling softly to herself, she rose, pulled the big pins out of her hair, and rang the bell. The chamber-maid came, a flat-chested, red-nosed old maid. Anne was rather fond of Rosina, and at once noticed that her nose was redder than usual.

"Why, Rosina, you have been crying!" she said, in her primitive Italian.

Rosina sniffed, set down the hot-water tin, and wiped her eyes with her apron.

"*Signorina*, do you know where the *signore* of number eighteen is, this evening?"

Anne was surprised. "No—oh, yes; I do, too. He has gone to see a friend at the Victoria. Why?"

Rosina dropped the little boot she had just picked up. "Oh, *signora! signora!*" she wailed.

Anne lost patience and scolded her.

"What is the matter?" she cried.

"Do stop howling and tell me!"

"*Ebbene*—though I'm not the woman to tell such things to young ladies—if I must, I must. *Giorgio, il signor conte's* man, told my cousin, the daughter of one-eyed Raffaello, the green-grocer. *Il signor conte* and the *signora* of number eighteen are going away together to-night!"

Anne's jaw dropped. "Going away together! Where are they going? That's *nonsense!*" she said.

"No; it's true. She's going to leave her husband. Oh, don't you see?"

Anne did see, and, when Rosina ran out of the room, in answer to the bell, the girl sat down on the edge of her bed, alone in the total collapse of all her faith in the world. She could tell no one, not even her mother, who must not be agitated. Anne was so cold that she shivered.

Anne found herself dressed again, and went quickly down the passage toward Mrs. Cresborough's room. As she passed by the little salon, she saw San Luca, standing by an open window. Claspng her hands tightly, Anne went in and closed the door.

## VII

EVERYTHING was ready. Giorgio was already at the station with the luggage, and the cab would come any minute for San Luca.

San Luca found, now that he had his own way, that the charm of it was rapidly evaporating. He was growing

old! He mourned this with the gravity of the Latin at twenty-four.

He was wondering how long his love would last, when he heard a slight noise and, turning, saw Anne.

"Oh," she cried, without prelude, "surely you won't be so wicked!"

"Wicked? What do you mean?"

"I mean—oh, about her. You are going to run away with her."

San Luca burst out laughing at a vision evoked by her words. He could not have carried Maud Cresborough to save his life.

"*Cara signorina mia*—" he began, but Anne interrupted with an astonishingly peremptory movement of her small brown hand.

"She says you love her. If you love her, how can you harm her so terribly?"

His face darkened. "So she has taken you into her confidence!" He was very angry. "It takes two people to 'run away,' as you call it," he said, slowly, and Anne understood.

"It is—it is horrible." The short upper lip trembled. "Oh, please don't do it!"

It was ridiculous, unheard of, preposterous; but Anne looked very pretty as she pleaded. And she had looked pretty when she scolded. He wondered how she would look when—then San Luca lost his head.

"Anne," he said, "will you marry me?"

"Oh, please! I am in earnest."

"So am I, Anne. I have been bad, as you say, but I will be good, Anne!"

"Please; no, I can't—I won't."

He forgot the waiting cab, the woman who had probably even now started to the station to meet him. "I love you!" he said.

He did not love her, but he thought he did, for the moment.

But Anne shook her head, frowning. "I will not, so please stop!"

Then: "She loves me, and you can save her."

"Do you mean that you are trying to bully me?"

Then, suddenly, she realized the strength of the cards she held.

"If you love me, she won't go," she cried.

There was enough good in him to make him hate himself, as he persisted.

"She will go!" he said.

Anne darted from the room, without a word.

Mrs. Cresborough was pinning on her hat when Anne came in without knocking.

"You! What is the matter?" she asked, sharply.

Anne laughed. "I came to tell you a piece of news. Count San Luca has just asked me to marry him."

Maud Cresborough's face whitened. "What?"

"Count San Luca has just asked me to marry him."

The beautiful woman sank into a chair. It never occurred to her to doubt Anne's word. After a moment she whispered: "And—you have accepted him?"

"Accepted him? I loathe him."

This, too, was the truth, and Mrs. Cresborough knew it. With an effort, she rose and turned down the lamp. "All the lamps in this hotel smoke," she said, impatiently. Then she sat down again.

"I am glad you did not accept him, Anne. I fear he is, like many Italians, rather unprincipled."

Anne burst into a harsh laugh.

Then Mrs. Cresborough understood, and, without a word, stood aside to let the girl pass to the door. As she opened it, some one knocked, and the concierge appeared.

"A note for you, miss," he said. Then he held out his salver to Mrs. Cresborough.

"*Il signor conte* sends many compliments, *signora*," he said. "He has been called away suddenly." She took the cards, mechanically.

This, then, was the end.

Anne had opened her letter. She read it carefully through, and then handed it to Mrs. Cresborough.

"I don't wish it," she said, and left the room.

Mrs. Cresborough sat down by the

table, turned up the smoking lamp and slowly unfolded the note.

MADemoisELLE:

You have left me only one course—to go away. Although you despise me, I am a gentleman, and you must allow me to express my regret at your having been mixed up in this unhappy affair. In only one way can I serve you, and that I will do—go away and never again approach your friend, for whom you pleaded better than you knew. Permit me, mademoiselle, to sign myself,

Your humble servant,  
SAN LUCA.

### VIII

SAN LUCA is not yet married, though he has been in love eight times since the episode of Anne. He did not regret Maud Cresborough for any length of time, and would shortly have been in despair had Anne responded to his momentary *emballement*, but his letter was well meant and perfectly sincere.

Anne had been pretty, as she scolded and pleaded!

"Mr. Brown," Mrs. Cresborough said the next day, as she and Dick waited for the train that was to take her and her husband to Florence, "I wonder if you'll let me say something to you?" Dick grunted. "It's about Anne." He grunted again. He wished Cresborough would hurry with that luggage.

"I have seen," the beautiful woman went on, not looking at him, "that you were—well, not friendly toward poor San Luca; and, of course, I know why. I think, under the circumstances, that I am justified in breaking a confidence for you."

"I don't wish you to break any confidences for me, Mrs. Cresborough."

"Anne refused San Luca—that is all. Here is Jim."

Dick went back up the hot white street, his straw hat, bound with his gaudy college colors, tilted over his eyes. Just as he reached the hotel, he caught sight of Anne, who had not before appeared that day, far up the beach. He hurried after her. When he caught up with her, he held out his hand.

"Poor old Anne! you do look seedy. Awful headache, eh?"

"No," returned Anne, bluntly, "I haven't a headache."

After a pause, Brown stopped short. "Look here, Anne; was San Luca in love with you?"

"No."

"Well, then—it's none of my business, but I want to know if he proposed to you."

"You've no right to ask me that."

"Oh, Anne!" he began, humbly, but he stopped short.

She looked at him, and her face changed. "Let's go home; mother will be waiting."

They turned and walked quickly back over the hard sand. Just before they reached the *capana*, Dick stopped again.

"Anne," he said, "do you think you could ever care enough for me to marry me? I don't mean now, but some time?"

Anne shook her head. "No, Dick; I can never care for any one again. I used to love every one, you know, but now—well, I can't tell you why, but I have stopped believing in people."

Dick did not laugh.

"I have not done anything to make you lose faith in me, have I, Anne?"

"I know you haven't. I can't tell you why, and I can't trouble mother; but I can never care for any one again."

Dick drew a deep sigh. "Well, if you won't have me, I think I'll go away somewhere, and shoot things."

Anne's eyes filled with tears. "Oh, Dick, please don't go. I can't imagine it without you!"

"I can't help it, Anne. I can't stand it any longer."

Anne hesitated a moment, and then said, slowly, "Well, Dick, I told you I'd promised never to care for any one any more; but—if I—I ever should—well—it couldn't ever be for any one but you!"

He couldn't see her face, but he was satisfied.

"I'll stay, Anne," he said.

Then they went on to the hotel.

# BOBBY JONKS ON HUMAN NATURE

By Tom P. Morgan

**H**UMAN nature is the excuse we generally offer for acting like a pig—only a pig merely attends to his own business and makes a hog of himself according to the dictates of his own conscience, and we don't. A pig don't lie, nor tell the teacher on you, nor slap you down just b'cuz your clothes fit you better than his'n, nor marry you and hen-peck you and drive you to drink, nor elocute you into an early grave, nor feel bigger than you without any reason, nor collect money for the heathen, nor buy wine for actresses, nor dye his whiskers, nor sell his vote for a mess of potash, nor tell you about his dyspepsia, nor try to reform you, nor be a Daughter of the Revolution—nor anything, only just 'tend strictly to his knitting and be a pig.

Humble though he is, the pig don't call his squeals singing. I am not mentioning any names, you understand, but from this we should learn to emulate the poor but honest pig. He don't flatter himself that he is a skylark, and neither should we—especially if we are an old maid. My Aunt Almira is an old maid, and my Uncle Bob says he wishes to gosh he had a dollar for every time he don't enjoy hearing her warble. Uncle Bob is an old bachelor. The pig seldom lives to be old—the good die young.

Every time we do a particularly ratty thing we say, "Aw, well, it's human nature!" And I guess that's about so, from what I know of folks in general. Birds in their little nests agree, but it is human nature for little children to bark and bite and scratch each other's eyes out. It is human

nature to get all you can and try to keep all you get, and also to be thankful b'cuz there is always somebody that's a great deal worse off than you are. It is human nature for us to grin and say, "I told you so," when we never said anything of the kind. It is human nature for a woman who is fat and hates it to think every woman who is thinner is so just for spite; and Uncle Bob says that when a woman is as fat as a bass-drum nothing tickles her so much as to have some man call her "little girl." Honest, that's what he said; but wouldn't it bump you?

It is human nature for us to be stuck on ourselves without any particular excuse, but we should always bear in mind that there are plenty of other people just as insignificant as we are. A big man flatters himself that he aches harder than a small one, but it ain't so. According to Uncle Bob, a good many men, if the egotism was pulled out of them, would look like umbrellas with the ribs gone. Uncle Bob says, "What's the use in climbing a tree to get a peach, when if we wait long enough it will fall down to us? We don't have to kill a man in order to get even with him; if we are patient he will die on his own hook. If we don't run after the women they'll run after us. All this is human nature."

So is 'most everything else in this life, according to Uncle Bob's way of looking at it. He says he don't know why reformers are generally deadbeats, only it seems to be human nature. He also says that when you find a pack of uncurried children that need patching so badly that they have

to scoot up garret every time company comes, and a husband and father as meek as a rabbit, you are sure to find a wife and mother with a fierce, commanding nose and a mission that compels her to go up and down the earth seeking whom she may devour—while her husband makes the bed at home, and her poor, benighted children cower

under it a great plenty. Man's inhumanity is pretty bad, but I guess, from what I hear about it, that woman's inhumanity is a heap worse.

This is all I can think of about human nature, except that there is a great deal of it in 'most everybody—though, of course, some people have more than others.



## THE ' WINGLESS LOVE

LOVE, that was fair, lies bleeding in the dust,  
 And desolate the shrines of tenderness  
 Where he, with gentle touch, was wont to bless  
 Each fragrant draught of joy, each needful crust  
 Of sorrow; fallen is the house of trust,  
 Which those who cherished him through storm and stress,  
 And all things save untruth, left tenantless,  
 Since naught availed to stay his traitor thrust.

Yet, when Love saw them go, he waxed forlorn,  
 And sought to follow where their pathway led.  
 Alas! his little wings were crushed and torn  
 Upon the ruins, whence their faith had fled.  
 And all his effort, henceforth, shall be vain—  
 False Love may never use his wings again!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



## WHERE THE BURDEN LAY

HE—Does the fact that I have only three thousand dollars a year make any difference to you?

SHE—No; but it may to you.



## DURING A SPEED TRIAL

DASHAWAY—Do you believe in old maxims and sayings?

MISS RIPLACE (*as they run over two children and a dog*)—Well, I think there can be no doubt that "a new automobile brougham sweeps clean."



# THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING AMUSING

By Ralph Henry Barbour

“YOU’VE no business coming here at this time of day,” said Myra, severely.

I drew out my watch and glanced at it in surprise. “But it’s nearly half-past ten,” I objected.

“What?” exclaimed Myra.

“That is, it’s eight minutes after,” I amended. “And, anyhow, it’s very late. Why, I’ve been up for hours and hours, inhaling the delicious morning air, walking beside the dew-spangled hedges and listening to the matin-songs of—of—the crows.”

Myra sniffed, derisively. “Nonsense! You’re not more than half-awake now.” I opened my eyes very, very wide to disprove the accusation, and sat up as straight as possible in the basket-chair. “And I don’t care how long you’ve been up,” she went on; “you’ve no business coming here at this hour and interrupting affairs.”

“Oh, Myra! Another affair?”

“I’ve other things to do than to sit on the porch and talk to you!”

“There was a time—” I began, in gentle melancholy.

Myra sniffed again. I began to wonder if she had taken cold at the hop last evening.

“What do you wish?” she demanded.

“Wish?”

“Yes; why are you here?”

“Oh!” I settled back comfortably in the chair and brought my right knee up to the level of my chin, by means of my cane. Myra maintained her position on the porch rail, despite that I glanced invitingly toward a neighboring chair. She looked very well there, with her light-brown hair

resting against the sun-flecked screen. For a moment I viewed her with much satisfaction, before replying to her imperative question. Then:

“I came to commiserate,” I said, kindly.

“Commiserate! About what?”

“Concealment is impossible,” I answered, gravely. “I know all. As soon as I heard it, I flew to your side. I bring sympathy, Myra.”

“Don’t be silly,” she begged. “What is it you’ve heard?”

“I heard— May I smoke?” Myra nodded. I lighted a cigar, with extraordinary deliberation. Then, “I heard of your engagement,” I resumed, sorrowfully. Myra strove to look indifferent. She even laughed; but her laugh rang false, I thought.

“To whom?” she asked.

“To Brooke Livingstone.”

Myra appeared annoyed. “Who told you?” she demanded.

“Well, a little bird——”

“Huh! One of those crows, I suppose? You’re——”

“That’s a rhyme; you must say something or do something; what is it?”

“Keep still,” she said, imperiously.

“All right; but you’ll not get your wish. Don’t blame me. I told you in plenty of time. All you had to do was—to—er—throw some salt over your shoulder—or say your prayers backward——”

“Who—told—you?” with peculiar emphasis.

“Miss Needham,” I answered, humbly.

“I thought so!” triumphed Myra. “I just thought so!”

“Did you? Why?”

"Because she's—she's always saying things about other people, always gossiping! And it's just like you to listen to her!"

"I couldn't help it. If you'd given me the waltz I asked for, I wouldn't have been driven to seek her society; and, further, if I hadn't sought her society, she wouldn't have told me the awful truth; and there you are. You see, Myra, it is all your fault."

"There were plenty of other girls," answered Myra, warmly. "You didn't have to go to her, I fancy."

"It was fate," I replied, shaking my head sadly. "I spent a wretched night. I tossed and turned all through the long hours——"

"I see you!" she scoffed.

I looked hurt; or, at least, I tried to. I do not believe it was a success, for Myra's countenance did not soften. Instead, she said, after a moment, with a sigh of resignation:

"Well, begin, and let's get it over with."

"Begin?" I questioned; "begin what?"

"Commiserating."

"Oh!" At the expense of much trouble, I sat forward and reached for her hand. She drew it away, sharply. I shrugged my shoulders. "I'm sorry, but I can't commiserate with any one unless I hold her hand. It's absolutely necessary."

"Then you might as well go back to the hotel," she answered, cruelly.

But I shook my head. "I have a duty to perform, Myra. Far be it from me to allow my personal inclinations to interfere with the discharge of my duty. Nay, perish the thought!"

"Well, if your duty is to sprawl here all the morning in that chair, and smoke horrid cigars——"

"You noticed it?" I cried, eagerly. "It is awful, isn't it? It's one of his, Livingstone's. Do you know, Myra" —I dropped my voice to a hoarse whisper and looked suspiciously about the porch—"do you know, I half-believe he's trying to get me out of the way, to poison me off; else, why

this?" I looked accusingly at the cigar.

"Well, if he finds you as tiresome as I do," replied Myra, "he's not altogether to blame."

"How sharper than a servant's tooth——" I began. Myra slid off the railing.

"I'm going in," she announced, calmly.

"One moment!" I implored. "Tell me, is it—am I to believe the worst?"

"I'll not tell you. If you wish to know any more you may go back to Stella Needham. Besides, it's none of your affair whether I'm engaged to Mr. Livingstone or not."

"Well, really, Myra, considering that I have promised to marry you myself——"

"Our engagement is broken off, and you know it very well!" she answered, sharply.

I shook my head in remonstrance. "No, Myra, that is not absolutely true. Let us, whatever happens, be quite honest with each other. *You* broke your half of our engagement, but I have never concurred; so, at least, you are half-engaged. As your half-fiancé, I must protest against this—er—this folly."

"I don't care a—a——"

"Myra!"

"—a continental for your protest! You may protest until you're black in the face."

"Horrors!"

"If I want to marry Mr. Livingstone, I shall!"

"But how about me? Now, look here, Myra, I'm not one to disparage a rival, but I beg of you to pause in your mad career and consider one or two things."

Myra paused in her mad career, long enough to sit perilously on the edge of the bamboo table and swing a very small shoe in a manner that suggested irritation. I relighted my cigar, which had gone out during the excitement, and then faced her, gravely.

"I ask you, Myra, to compare the attractions, the merits, the charms of Brooke Livingstone with mine. Let

us go about it systematically. First, as to worldly wealth——”

“Money isn’t everything,” said Myra, shortly.

“Your tone implies that it isn’t anything,” I responded; “so, we’ll let it go. Secondly, as to—er—position——”

“Mr. Livingstone is quite prominent socially and quite——”

“Exactly; just what I was about to say. The score is one—and. Thirdly, as to personal—er—attraction.”

Myra grinned. I frowned, severely.

“Brooke Livingstone has, I will acknowledge, a certain—er—physical beauty, which, as a whole, is satisfying. But, if we proceed to analyze it, we find that it is deceptive. For instance, his nose——”

“His nose is beautiful!” cried Myra.

“I grant you that it is well shaped and regular——”

“It’s a very good nose!”

“I’ve no objections to make to it on the score of morals,” I went on. “It may, as you say, be a very good nose; possibly, it never inserts itself into other persons’ affairs——”

“Noses are different,” commented Myra, softly.

“—or otherwise misbehaves. But—but it lacks character. Now, my nose——”

Myra giggled, impolitely, openly.

“My nose, while not what one could term classical, shows a marvelous depth of character. You will observe that it is not over-long and is slightly—er—let us say, *retroussé*. It is a good-natured nose, a fair-minded nose, a nose which would prompt you to say, upon observing it, ‘Here is a man who will make a good husband.’ Isn’t that so?”

“I had never noticed it,” giggled Myra.

“Well, let us take up the subject of mouths,” I continued. “Now, that feature of Brooke Livingstone’s countenance is decidedly misleading. At first glance it pleases, but——”

“You’re very tiresome,” interrupted Myra. “Mr. Livingstone is very, very handsome, and it is quite

useless for you to say that he is not.”

“Quite; I have no intention of saying so. He *is* handsome. But compare him with me, Myra! Look first on that picture, then on this.” Again Myra gave way to unseemly merriment.

“You’re levity itself,” I murmured, sadly.

“I—I’m comparing!” laughed Myra.

“Mind you,” I went on, judicially, “I do not assert that I am handsomer than Livingstone, judged, that is, by the ordinary standards. But I do say that my features are far more interesting, more—er—unusual, unique. In studying my face you are forever meeting with astounding incongruities, constantly finding new surprises. I say, proudly, that my features are far from commonplace; never once do they descend to the plane of mediocre regularity. My nose and mouth are of entirely different ‘schools,’ if I may use the term in such a connection; my chin and forehead are widely separated, not, you understand, by facial space, but rather by such an interim as exists between the Age of Stone and that of Electricity. Even my eyes are not from the same model; the left is of a beautiful, melting brown, the right of an equally lovely but quite different shade of hazel. In short——”

“Bother!” interrupted Myra, rather crossly. “Your features are very nice; not—handsome, exactly—but——”

“Interesting?” I prompted, hopefully.

“Yes.”

“And I? You find me—the same?”

“Well, I’m not sure about interesting,” Myra replied, apparently weighing her words with much care, “but—at times—amusing.”

“Thank you,” I breathed, gratefully.

“Vastly amusing,” repeated Myra.

“And in comparison with Brooke——?”

"Hush!" whispered Myra. She held up a warning hand and peeped out through a slit in the screen. I listened. Steps were crunching the gravel of the driveway and some one was whistling, blithely. Myra's face expressed annoyance, or so I fancied. I raised a corner of the screen with my cane and looked. Mr. Brooke Livingstone approached. I sighed. The chair was very comfortable, and Myra—

She turned from the screen. "Hush!" she whispered again. "Hush!" I repeated. I felt like a conspirator, and seized my cigar-case from the table, resolved to sell my life dearly. Behind us an open window showed the dim recesses of the library. Myra, finger on lips, stepped across the sill. I followed. We laughed softly together in the darkness. A cane tapped the steps outside. Myra drew the curtain.



## BALLADE OF TYRANNY

WHY is it that few letters reach my door?  
 Why is it that so many go astray?  
 Why is it that a parcel from a store  
 Loiters from morning until twilight gray?  
 Like decent folk my rent I duly pay,  
 Yet coal and gas bills soar eternally.  
 Prince, read the riddle of my somber lay—  
 The janitor does not approve of me.

Why does the gay and festive bachelor  
 Who lives above me, seek to move in May?  
 Why must he learn, in midnight vigil sore,  
 Who has no key without the door must stay?  
 Why are his friends politely turned away,  
 While up above he waits with visage grim?  
 Prince, read the riddle of my somber lay—  
 The janitor does not approve of him.

Why are the couple on the second floor  
 Left without heat upon the coldest day,  
 And made to clamor uselessly therefor?  
 Why for small favors must they humbly pray?  
 Why from the roof is blown their fine array?  
 Why is it that their maids but stay *pro tem*?  
 Prince, read the riddle of my somber lay—  
 The janitor does not approve of them.

### L'ENVOI

Tenants, no little word we dare to say;  
 Beneath a tyrant's rule 'twas ever thus.  
 Prince, read the riddle of my somber lay—  
 The janitor does not approve of us.

JOHN WINWOOD.

## TWO PARABLES

By Charles Battell Loomis

### THE MILLIONAIRE AND THE HIRELING

THERE were two men, and one was a millionaire, the other a hireling. One of them traveled everywhere, and always surrounded himself with luxuries; he dressed well, he ate the best the markets afforded, cooked in the best manner by the best *chefs*. His father, although not quite a millionaire, had always been wealthy, and the son started well. Although accustomed to spend money like water, he was a man of innate refinement and of cultivated tastes; he knew a good picture, even when it was advertised with a blare of trumpets; he knew a good picture, even if it was painted yesterday. He was not biased by either the price or the name of the artist. With him, merit was everything and price nothing, because he had absolute discernment. Beautiful music appealed to him, and, in the various capitals of the Old World, he heard the finest orchestras; nor was he insensible to the fact that in Boston and in New York just as good music, quite as well played, was to be heard during every Winter season. While he admired the music and art of the Old World, he had the eye of a seer, and he knew that the music and the art of the future will come out from America; and when he had bought a museumful of Old-World treasures, and listened to innumerable concerts in Berlin, Paris and Vienna, he turned his steps to the country of his birth, and bought the pieces of sculpture and the landscapes of the young men who are working to the greater glory of America. This

spender of money had also an appreciation of literature, and, with an inexhaustible purse and abundant leisure to do as he pleased, he should have been a happy man.

But he was most miserable.

The other man was happy. To be sure, he dressed in dingy, snuffy garments and spent most of his time in a dingy, snuffy office, figuring and—figuring. His hurried luncheon was not more cheap than crude, for he had never cultivated his taste in the slightest degree. His father had been crude and common before him. This slave to figures went nowhere, and saw no men save men of business. The music of a hand-organ was almost as unpleasant to him as the music of grand opera, and he thanked heaven that he seldom heard either, for the office where he worked was at the top of a high building, and his evenings were spent at home. His reading was found in his daily paper, and, although in true American style he often wished that he possessed the biggest art gallery in the world, he could not have told the difference between a tea-store chromo and a Daubigny.

Yet, he bid fair to gain his wish; for this happy, hard-working man was the millionaire, and the unhappy fellow, who had scoured Europe in search of treasure, was his well-paid agent, his hireling.

### THE REAL AND THE FALSE

A gullible man once went a-traveling. And he had eyes that were eager to behold every famous place and personage, and ears that were ready to



hear every wonder-tale of the places that he visited, and a heart full of reverence and sympathy for the things that are past, and a memory that was like the eternal hills.

And, at the same time, one set out on his travels who held great men and great deeds and fine places in contempt. Little of what he heard did he believe. To him a coronation held no more interest than a shower of rain, and, when they showed him the King of Denmark, he curled his lip, and said, "I do not believe all I see. This is an ordinary citizen." And a great painting said no more to him than a newspaper of an old date.

But the gullible man's travels were full of endless interest. They pointed out a factory chimney, and told him that it was the Tower of London; and he straightway fell to moralizing over the famous dead, who had come to their end in that place. They showed him a chromo, and told him that it was an undoubted Velasquez; and he entered into an ecstasy of admiration, and recalled many things he had read of the great Spaniard. They showed him a modern eating-house, and told him that in that hostelry Johnson and Boswell had spent evening after evening; and he drank in their words, and made a hallowed spot in his mind for the knowledge. They showed him a mummer, dressed in ducal livery to advertise a commodity, and told him that it was the Duke of Norfolk; and he said, "How like to common mortals, and yet how very different!" Always, he kept his eyes and ears

open, but, being a man of credulous mold, he received dross, and treasured it for gold.

In the evening of life, the one who had traveled in a state of lofty indifference had no thoughts worth considering, and spent his time among crowds of his fellows, that he need not be bothered to think. And of his travels, no whit of recollection remained.

But the credulous man, when the time of the coming of the sunset was near, sat on his porch under the shadows of his grape-vine, and caused to pass before his mind the great places he had seen and the characteristic things he had heard of famous men. And he called his little granddaughter to him, and said:

"My dear, when you are grown, you may see the strange countries that I have seen, and lay up treasures for your old age, as I have done. I have stood and gazed into the window of the hostelry where the great Johnson held converse with Boswell, and, perhaps, saw the same grill that cooked the steaks for the famous men of that age. And, once, I saw the Duke of Norfolk, standing on a corner like an ordinary man, the observed of all observers. And the chimney-like campanile of the Tower of London has been imaged on my eyes, and a canvas made immortal by Velasquez has been within my hands. Ah, my dear, there is nothing like travel and observation for conserving pictures for one's old age!"

And he patted the girl's silken hair, and fell into an old man's reverie.



## AN UNFORTUNATE GUESS

"SHE broke the engagement, eh?"  
 "Yes; she asked him to guess her age."  
 "Well?"  
 "He guessed it."